Halal Certification in Malaysia and Singapore:
Culinary infrastructure at the intersection of religion and politics

by

Mohd Syaifulzafni Abdul Aziz

MBA (Applied Finance & Investment)

National University, Malaysia

B. Sc. in Business Administration (Finance & Economics)

Drexel University Pennsylvania, United States of America

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I am truly indebted to the Graduate Research Office of the University of Tasmania for the opportunity to share my experience in Halal development in Malaysia. The completion of this thesis has enabled me to put to use the knowledge acquired during my employment with the Halal Development Corporation and exposure to the Halal industry. The idea for this thesis emerged when I, together with senior government officials from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, participated in the 10th World Islamic Economic Forum in Dubai, 2014. Through discussions with a number of officials from key Islamic countries, I started to realise the varying understandings and approaches undertaken by those countries concerning Halal regulation and commercialisation. Despite subscribing to a similar religious faith, Muslim consumers in many ways are nebulous. However, the encouragement to delve into the topic came at the height of a series of my business trips to various regions in China as part of the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative between China and Malaysia during 2014 and 2016. This experience provoked me to pursue and write about the politics of Halal. During this pursuit, I began to see the striking paradox between the need to promote Muslim trade and consumption among predominantly Islamic countries and also to address the states' concern about the spread of Islamic customs within the social and political sphere of the communist party. I approached the University of Tasmania and others with my expression of interest in conducting research on Halal. Among the earliest replies was that from Associate Professor Dr Nicki Tarulevicz, who has since been supporting my research and placing her trust in me to complete this thesis. A special thanks to co-supervisor Professor James Chin for his guidance and intellectual discourse that has enabled me to explore the topic and transition it into academic perspective. Also, thanks to my wife Fazlinda Kassim for her unceasing support and encouragement and to my three children for constantly reminding me of the thesis deadline. Finally, I would also like to thank all those who directly or indirectly have contributed to the completion of the thesis.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Definition
ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement)
ADS	Administrative and Diplomatic Services
AVA	Agri-food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore
BN	Barisan Nasional (National Front)
CODEX	Codex Alimentarius
DVS	Department of Veterinary Services
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	General Election
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
HALMQ	Halal Quality Management System
HDB	Housing Development Board
HDC	Halal Industry Development Corporation
IKIAM	Malaysia Institute of International Islamic Cooperation
INA	Indian National Army
JAIN	Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri (State Religious Department)
JAKIM	Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia)
KMM	Kesatuan Melayu Malaya (Young Malays Union)
MAIN	Majlis Agama Islam Negeri (State Religious Authority)
MATRADE	Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MCS	Malayan Civil Service
MDU	Malayan Democratic Union
MIC	Malayan Indian Congress
MIHAS	Malaysian International Halal Showcase
MIDA	Malaysia Investment Development Corporation
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MMA	Malayan Military Administration
MPAJA	Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army
MS	Malaysian Standards
MUIS	Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (Islamic Religious Council of Singapore)
NEA	National Environment Agency
NEP	New Economic Policy
PAP	People's Actions Party
PAS	Parti Islam SeMalaysia (Malaysian Islamic Party)
RISDA	Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority
SPRING	Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
WHF	World Halal Forum

ABSTRACT

Scholars use the term 'religious economy' to describe situations where religion is treated as a marketplace, analogous to a typical business or economic realm. The term suggests that religious or moral-related markets are compatible with and embedded in with political interests that suit the ruling political parties, ostensibly for maintaining their hegemony and thereby sustaining power. In Southeast Asia, religion and ethnic culture remain among the key determinants in ensuring political and social stability. Moreover, the dynamic multi-ethnic and multicultural societies of Malaysia and Singapore serve as exemplars of Halal systems to understand and entice wider conclusions on the subject. My central argument is that the state authorities have been at the forefront in exploiting Islamic values and ideas for the purpose of attaining hegemony and sustaining dominance. The management of Halal production, certification and regulation are, in Jeffrey Pilcher's terms, a form of 'culinary infrastructure'[1] that unites cultural and social practices, and in the case of Malaysia and Singapore, are entangled with '… intense political negotiation'.[2] This thesis envisages studies on the multidisciplinary expressions of Halal systems comprising political, social and economic discourses. Muslims in both states are becoming increasingly cognisant of their religious obligations (particularly in diet and dress); this, coupled with evolving lifestyle and increasing purchasing power, has created demand for Halal products. Halal certification expression is reflective of an outcome of modernisation of Malay people's consumerism, bureaucratisation and industrialisation of Islam as culinary infrastructure where Halal is viewed beyond mere religious lenses.

[1] Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "Culinary Infrastructure: How facilities and technologies create value and meaning around food". *Global Food History* 2(2), (2016): 118.
[2] *Ibid* 119.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

The wave of global awareness of Halal food has moved up the political and economic ladder of many countries irrespective of whether they are Muslim majority or Muslim minority countries. Muslims are becoming increasingly cognisant of their religious obligations, while some scholars argue that non-Muslims are expected to shift towards Halal food due to rising concerns about hygiene and food safety. Halal is an Arabic term that translates as permissible in the context of Muslim dietary requirements, as opposed to the term haram, which means forbidden or unlawful in Islam. The Halal designation means that the food products have been produced (substance) and handled stringently (the process) under the requirements of the Islamic dietary regulation. Halal certification systems vary from one country to another, as shown in the followings standards:

> **Malaysian standards (MS1500:2009)** defines Halal as "food or goods are neither is nor consist of or contain any part or matter of an animal that is prohibited by *syariah* law or that has been slaughtered in accordance with *syariah* law and fatwa (religious ruling), does not contain anything which is impure, intoxicate, or contain any part of human being or its yield, not poisonous or hazardous to health. The food or goods has not been prepared using any instruments that is contaminated with *najs* (such as blood, urine and faeces) and in the course of preparing, processing or storage been in contact with non-Halal foods".[3]
>
> **Singapore MUIS Halal Certification Standard** refers Halal food to ingredients used from Halal sources and the manner at which the ingredients are

[3] Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) or Islamic Development Department of Malaysia, *Manual Procedure for Malaysia Halal Certification (Third revision),* 2015

being processed and handled. The provision of Halal covers aspects of hygiene and nutrition, safe for human consumption and carries a high nutritional value.[4]

Riaz and Chaudry suggest in determining whether the food products are Halal or haram, depends on their nature, how they are processed and obtained.[5] That raises the notion of Halal 'way of life', which means Muslims align their consumption, behavior and every other aspect to their religious beliefs and 'divine orders'.[6] Today's evolving lifestyles and improvement in purchasing power, especially among Muslims, mean there is a rising demand for products that conform to Islamic standards.

According to Euromonitor International, the size of the Halal market (about USD 55 billion in 2017), and the rapid growth of the Muslim population (reaching nearly one in five people in the world today), could be the driving forces towards adopting Halal as part of a national development plan.[7] Further, as Halal requirements are in accordance with conventional quality standards, including HACCP[8] and Codex[9], they should attract wider non-Muslim consumers, predominantly those who are keen to source healthy and hygienic cuisines. In order to be certified Halal, a product must be prepared from permissible ingredients, processed in a clean and hygienic manner and able to be safely consumed. As Johan Fischer has observed, Halal is no longer simply a set of regulations for food and food preparation; it is a growing market that involves producers, consumers and certifying authorities, which extends beyond the Muslim population.[10] Nevertheless, as reported by Reuters[11], the global Halal food market and meat snacks markets in 2018 are dominated by non-Muslim countries and regions, such as the United

[4] Majlis Ugama Islam Singapore (MUIS) or Islamic Religious Council of Singapore/, General Guidelines for the handling and processing of Halal Food, 2005, item 1.1-1.4
[5] Mian N. Riaz and Muhammad M. Chaudry. *Halal Food Production* (CRC Press, 2004), 14
[6] *Ibid*, 12.
[7] Euromonitor International is the world's leading independent provider of strategic market research. The organisation create data and analysis on thousands of products and services around the world.
[8] Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) is a way of managing food safety hazards
[9] Codex Alimentarius, or "Food Code" is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
[10] Johan Fischer, "Religious Science and Markets: Modern Halal production, trade and consumption." *EMBO Report Vol. 9* (2008): 828-831.
[11] "Global Halal Food Market and Meat Snacks Market 2018 Analysis By Demand, Supply, Production, Key Manufacturers, Top Regions, Growth & Forecast 2022" https://www.reuters.com/brandfeatures /venture-capital/article?id=27966. Accessed 11 November, 2019.

States, Canada, Mexico, Germany, France, UK, Italy, Russia, China, Japan, India, Korea, Australia, Brazil, and Africa. It has been estimated that over 90% of the imported Halal food products into Muslim countries originated from non-Muslim countries. Alongside the growth of global Halal markets, a number of public and private organisations are now participating in Halal certification services.

The proliferation of those organisations offering Halal certification services emanated from varying 'interpretation of Islamic laws'[12], cultural and political influence[13], dissimilar standards, and ever-evolving regulatory structure. Febe Armanious and Bogac Ergene, in their seminal book *Halal Food: A History*, attribute this phenomenon as 'a multifarious ecology' of Halal – a reflection of plurality in the global Muslim populace.[14] Due to this plurality, having a trustworthy and reliable certification system for adherence to products to Halal standards is necessary. Food historian Jeffrey Pilcher describes certification regimes as 'an infrastructure of knowledge and trust that has become important in determining the value of commodified foods'.[15] This infrastructure of knowledge may be, as defined by Paul N. Edwards, a 'network of people, artifacts and institutions that generate, share and maintain specific knowledge about the human and natural worlds'.[16] I engage with Pilcher's concept on culinary infrastructure as a 'relationship between physical components that are used to mobilise food', such as ingredients, 'with the immaterial form that is responsible to convey knowledge about food', *inter alia*, the quality certification, 'thereby facilitating the production and consumption of food'.[17] The context of Halal certification is not just about certifying the

[12] Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, "Social definitions of Halal quality: the case of Maghrebi Muslims in France". Downloaded from manchesteropenhive.com at 21 August 2018 via free access.
[13] Johan Fischer, "Cast the net wider: How a vision of Global Halal Markets is overcoming network envy".
[14] In this book, Febe Armanious and Bogac Ergene, suggest the global Halal must contend with the lack of uniform rules; no universal Halal logo, no universal Halal brands and no universal Halal standards. Notwithstanding numerous bodies strive to control Halal legalistic formulations (certification agencies, governments and international organisations), market sensitivity, industrialised food production and modern consumerists' trends have played important roles in shaping Halal.
[15] Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "Culinary Infrastructure: How facilities and technologies create value and meaning around food". *Global Food History* 2(2), (2016): 118.
[16] Paul N. Edwards, *A Vast Machine Computer Models, Climate Data and the Politics of Global Warming*, (The MIT Press 2010) Chap. 1, 17.
[17] Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "Culinary Infrastructure: How facilities and technologies create value and meaning around food". *Global Food History* 2(2), (2016): 107.

end product of goods and services, but rather it encompasses the entire infrastructure and process, from production and manufacturing to delivery and consumption. The logistical infrastructure is just as important as its transformation to the final product, i.e. the Halal certified product begins at the earliest stage of raw material production.

The findings in this thesis elucidate the significance of both Malaysia and Singapore's Halal certification systems to Halal study, as Johan Fischer posits, those two countries 'hold a special position; that is, they are the only two countries in which state bodies certify Halal products, spaces (shops, factories, and restaurants) as well as work processes'.[18] Fischer argues that in these two states 'regulatory institutions and global markets interact'.[19]

The term 'Global Halal Market' was in fact adopted in 2004 in Malaysia when that country published its first official Halal Standard MS1500:2004, which was launched by Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi at the Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS) event in Kuala Lumpur.[20] This event brought together, for the first time, buyers and sellers of Halal-certified products from around the world and demonstrated the reality of a global Halal market. Subsequently, in 2006, the inaugural World Halal Forum (WHF) in Kuala Lumpur attracted industry leaders, including senior representatives from the world's largest food companies such as Nestlé, McDonald's and Tesco. Major international news media organisations covered the event and adopted the term 'Halal industry'. Similarly, it was about this time that Singapore, with its global reputation as a trading nation, came to be regarded as having one of the most effective, systematic and efficient Halal certification systems in the world.

Another significant factor in the global Halal market relates to the way in which the state, as postulated by Johan Fischer, 'attempts to sacralise commodities in a religious

[18] Johan Fisher, *Islam, Standards, and Technoscience in Global Halal Zones* (New York: Routledge, 2016), Chap.1, 1.
[19] *Ibid.,* 9.
[20] Refer to *'Halal Goes Global: From niche to mainstream'* by International Trade Centre 2015. The centre is the joint agency of the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations.

market'.[21] This is against the backdrop of multi-ethnic society (predominantly Malay, Chinese and Indian) where the population is identified along racial and religious cleavages. Although many scholars acknowledge that both Malaysia and Singapore have shared relatively similar paths in history, politics and economy, they are far from homogenous. The colonial British rule in the early days brought profound changes and transformed the future states economically and socially, but not without a cost. A compartmentalised society developed on the Malay Peninsula (as a result of the British 'divide and rule' approach) with race-based economic activities, which helped perpetuate the pluralistic society. This leds, as Damien Kingsbury states, to 'political tension'[22] as the economic rivalry between the Malays and Chinese was exacerbated by the Chinese business community controlling literally all economic activities, including production of much of the food and control of most of the eating outlets.

The communal riot of 13 May 1969 that killed and injured many Malaysians unveiled longstanding differences between their ethnic Chinese and Malays. The incident prompted awareness among the Malays to view food more strategically; henceforth the importance of building capacity to produce and manufacture own food and not to be overly dependent on the ethnic Chinese for food production and when eating outside. Further, the earlier separation of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 had triggered a debate about Malay Muslims' loyalty to Singapore. As reported in the *Far East Economic Review Asia 1998 Yearbook,* the late Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was quoted saying: 'Are we sure that in a moment of crisis, when the heat is on, we are all together heart to heart? I hope so. But we ought to have a fallback position and quickly fill up all the missing hearts if some go missing'.[23]

[21] Johan Fisher, *Islam, Standards, and Technoscience in Global Halal Zones* (New York: Routledge, 2016), Chap.1, 16.
[22] Damien Kingsbury "Post-colonial states, ethnic minorities and separatist conflicts: case studies from Southeast and South Asia" Ethnic and Racial Studies Vol. 34 No. 5 (May 2011): 762.
[23] Lee Kuan Yew is referring to Singaporean Malays who see themselves as Malay Muslim rather than Singaporean and who have family ties in Malaysia and Indonesia. Various literatures suggest that the state had been discriminating against the Malays in the Armed Forces (there is no Malay among their top ranks) due to potential 'moral' conflict that might face a Malay soldier if Singapore were at war with Malaysia or Indonesia.

Although the aim of this thesis is not to take a position on the argument of whether there is a sense of loyalty among the general Malays in Singapore, especially during crises, there was, nevertheless, evidence of Malays' loyalty towards their state when many Malays residing in Singapore during the separation from Malaysia in 1965 had earlier refused a Malaysian citizenship offer made by former Prime Minister of Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman.

As a strategic response from the 1969 communal riot and the separation of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965, both states opted as what David Brown refers to as 'soft authoritarian'[24] and William Case calls 'electoral authoritarianism'[25], reflecting the use of government apparatus or institutions to impose state bureaucratic control. Malaysia devised a social engineering policy instrument through the 1971 New Economic Policy[26] (NEP) to improve the economic and social imbalance of the *Bumiputera*[27] through the formation of an urban, educated, entrepreneurial, shareholding and high-consuming Malay middle class. However, I argue that the implementation of such policy inevitably institutionalises ethnicity as what Zakaria Haji Ahmad and Sharifah Munirah Alatas see as a 'Malay-based' polity, both in form and substance.[28] Social anthropologists Azmi Aziz and A.B. Shamsul argue that NEP has moved the Malay community towards 'Islamic fundamentals' as they turned 'to religion to seek refuge from the perceived negative influence of overt materialism'.[29] This was aggravated by the rise of Islamic radicalism in the 1970s that led to another triggering point in the rise

[24] David Brown, *The state and ethnic politics in Southeast Asia* (Routledge (1994) 3
[25] See William Case "Electoral authoritarianism in Malaysia: trajectory shift" *The Pacific Review* (2009) Vol 22 No. 3, 312. In this article, William suggests that Malaysia's dominant party, UMNO has mostly avoided steadfast coercion through adopting authoritarian rule and liberal democratic politics.
[26] According to the Malaysia's Economic Planning Unit, the NEP that was introduced in 1971 underscored the importance of achieving socio-economic goals alongside pursuing economic growth objectives as a way of creating harmony and unity in a nation with many ethnic and religious groups
[27]*Bumiputera* is a Malaysian term to describe Malays and other indigenous peoples of Southeast Asia, i.e. the Malay world, used similarly as in Indonesia and Brunei, translated literally as "son of the land" or "son of the soil".
[28]Zakaria Haji Ahmad and Sharifah Munirah Alatas. "Malaysia: In an uncertain mode" in *Driven by growth: Political change in the Asia Pacific Region*, ed. James William Morley (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group 2015), 179.
[29] Azmi Aziz & A. B. Shamsul, "The religious, the plural, the secular and the modern: a brief critical survey on Islam in Malaysia" *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 5:3, 341-356, https:doi.org/10.1080/1464937042000288651.

of religiosity and inculcation of Islamic values and practices among Malay Muslims in Southeast Asia. When it comes to food consumption, this includes Halal.

Singapore employs a range of policies to seemingly prevent the formation of ethnic dominance using meritocracy as its guiding principle. Gabriele Marranci argues that specific policies preserve cultural and religious social identities and avoid the assimilation of minorities within the overwhelming Chinese majority.[30] However, Vasu suggests that these policies perpetuate racial stereotypes because 'creating a category requires that it be filled with content'.[31] This thesis examines the role the secular State of Singapore plays in managing Islamic matters, including Halal. It elucidates motivation and objectives by the state in transforming Halal from merely a sensitive domestic Malay consumption matter to a matter of commercial, political and national strategic importance. For the Malays, Halal serves as an enabler for manifestation and reinforcement of their race and religious identity. Interestingly, unlike their Malay counterparts in Malaysia, Singaporean Malays are arguably more pragmatic in observing their Halal dietary requirement in their pursuit of social inclusion, integration and co-existence, along with Singapore's multicultural food space.

This thesis does not necessarily point to a normative judgment on Halal development in Malaysia and Singapore as being necessarily a negative or positive phenomenon. Instead, it examines forces that motivate those states to champion the Halal agenda, forces that derive from two overarching motives:

> **First**, reinforce authoritarianism through top-down policy and centralisation of a certification system implemented through the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (otherwise known as Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura – MUIS)[32] and

[30] Gabriele Marranci, "Defensive or offensive dining? Halal dining practices among Malay Muslim Singaporeans and their effects on integration", 85.
[31] N Vasu, "Encountering terrorism: Multiculturalism and Singapore", 29.
[32] Majlis Ugama Islam Singapore (MUIS) or Islamic Religious Council of Singapore was established as a statutory body in 1968 with the role of advising the President on Islamic affairs and has dealt with halal certification.

Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia – JAKIM)[33] for maintaining ethnic peace and stability.

Second, maintain distinct political dominance of key political parties. In Malaysia, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) predominantly stirs up the race and religion swirl to win the hearts and minds of the Malays. Similarly, in Singapore, the People's Action Party (PAP) uses Halal partly for economic and nation-building and, purportedly, for managing the religious diversity in that city-state.

The above motives explain why Halal development has been driven mainly by multi-ethnic countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, and not by mainstream Muslim-majority nations. In Singapore and Malaysia, the state opted for a structured social control system as a way of maintaining ethnic harmony and political stability. This is explored in detail in the following chapter.

In order to keep within this scope, I aim to validate the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (**H1**): *Culinary infrastructure of Halal certification is an embodied expression of knowledge and trust that is fortified by faith, thereby putting emphasis on the trustworthiness of the certification system.*

Hypothesis 2 (**H2**): *A state-initiated Halal certification system epitomises a significant feature of the state, conveying its hegemony through policies that serve to protect their political dominance, maintaining stability and pursuing economic outcomes.*

The rationale behind the hypothesis

The intent of this thesis is to demonstrate that, if true, the **H1-H2** hypotheses will contribute to the existing discourse and domain of culinary infrastructure. Interestingly,

[33] Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) or Islamic Development Department of Malaysia was initially set up as a secretariat to the National Council of Islamic Affairs by the Council of Rulers in 1968. It was then elevated to a full-fledged Department in 1997 in line with Malaysia's steadfast Islamic development and progress.

there has been continuous attention by scholars from anthropological and sociological backgrounds pursuing the study of Halal, which helps to clarify some of the complex realities of the Halal sphere.[34] However, there is a research gap in understanding how knowledge infrastructure in Halal certification as a whole, covering political, social and economic themes came together over time to define the meaning of the Halal market. Henceforth this thesis envisages studies on the multidisciplinary expressions of Halal systems as religion and ethnic culture are intricately linked to the political and social stability in both Malaysia and Singapore.

This thesis aims to fill that gap; first, by initiating a shift beyond the study of the market and industry potentials towards an examination of state motivation behind legislating religious law, sponsoring religious entities and promoting their activities. Secondly, the thesis highlights historical events and lessons learned employing two examples: one that paves the way to the invoking of Islamic values in their entire government systems and the other in which effective religious management was adopted to avoid potential communal tension and maintaining political stability. This is where and why the outcome of Halal development varies between these two states. In addressing these variations, the thesis extends the discussion about Halal certification driven by states that are not considered mainstream Islamic nations.

H1 claims that Halal certification encompasses particular knowledge – including standards, codes of practice – and popular knowledge and trust. As it is related to the Muslim faith[35], the trustworthiness of the certification system becomes important. In short, **H1** offers another dimension of the culinary infrastructure of Halal certification in that it covers knowledge, the socio-technical structure[36] and popular knowledge. As

[34] Example of scholars include religious concept of halal food (Riaz & Chaudry 2004), its production, distribution and relevance for Muslim migrants in non-Muslim places (Fischer 2008, 2009), the protests against halal slaughtering practice (Smith 2007) and the consumption of halal food (James 2004).
[35] See Karijn Bonne and Wim Verbeke, "Religious values informing halal meat production and the control and delivery of halal credence quality", *Agriculture and Human Values* (2008) 25:35–47; Gareth R. T. White and Anthony Samuel, "Fairtrade and Halal Food Certification and Labeling: Commercial Lessons and Religious Limitations", *Journal of Macro marketing*, Vol. 36(4) 2016:388-399
[36] As per Karijn Bonne and Wim Verbeke, the term socio-technical structure of Halal is informed by dietary laws, values or religious prescriptions, which act as a means of definition for the desired quality. It

verification of Halal authenticity is virtually absent, consumer trust seems to rely on faith that gives significance to the certification bodies and the associated criteria on which the product is being certified for both organisations and consumers.

H2 recognises the work of Smith and Woodberry[37] as well as Wald and Calhoun-Brown[38] on the relationship between religion and the state where both play an important role in national and international politics. Halal certification by the state seems predominantly to point to a process in which the ruling political parties turn to religious values and ideas to attain dominance and remain in power. I am cognisant of argument by Pollack and Rosta[39] presuming religion would decline as a casualty of modernity; however, policy by governments towards religion has varying outcomes, including democratisation[40] and level of religious activity.[41] Essentially, religion has remained a key concern by governments across Southeast Asia, for example, Southeast Asian Islamic State Jihadists (from Indonesia, Malaysia and Cambodia), the Little India Riot in Singapore, and Myanmar's Rohingya crisis.

Research Questions

This thesis strives to answer the following questions:

- *How do we explain the varying interpretations of the meaning of Halal? (Q1)*
- *How have political, social and economic factors shaped motivation and affected expression by Malaysia and Singapore in implementing Halal? (Q2)*

is laid down in a set of principles, standards, and rules to be applied and monitored throughout the production process and the supply chain

[37] See Robert D. Woodberry and Christian S. Smith, *Conservative Protestants in America*, Sociology Department, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina (1998):25. In this article Smith and Woodberry, argue that religious factors often predict political view of the people is better than class or gender based on Conservative Protestants in America.

[38] As observed by Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, Rowman & Littlefield (2014):130-132. Institutions such as churches, temples, mosques and synagogues are powerful contexts for religious mobilisation not only because of their ministers but also because they are rich in resources and offers fantastic contexts for mobilisation because they combine culture, leadership, money, facilities, infrastructure, an audience and a communication network.

[39] Pollack, Detlef and Rosta, Gergely.2016:434-435. *Religion and Modernity* Translated by David West, Oxford University Press.

[40] Robert D. Woodberry and Timothy S. Shah, "Christianity and Democracy: The Pioneering Protestants". *Journal of Democracy*, Vol 15(2), (2004):59-60

[41] Roger Finke and Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Supply-Side Explanations for Religious Change". *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol 527, (1993): 27-39

The answers will be achieved through analysis of official government documents, selected studies and literature, as well as media coverage relevant to the topic.

The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this thesis is guided by the work of Jeffrey M. Pilcher, which is useful in continuing the discourse that includes Halal certification as the culinary infrastructure of knowledge and trust. I also discuss the work of Johan Fishers Halal Frontier framework together with Pierre Bourdieu on culture, class and consumption. The thesis is structured with three overarching themes: 1) certification as a culinary infrastructure of knowledge and trust, 2) claiming trust and authority through the institutionalisation of Halal agendas, and 3) culture and consumption.

i. Certification: Culinary Infrastructure of knowledge and trust

This thesis refers to Jeffrey M. Pilcher, a known figure in the sphere of food history, on the infrastructure components that facilitate the movement of food. He introduced the concept of culinary infrastructure that provides a new dimension in analysing 'productive linkages between the physical nature of food systems and production with the symbolic and social element of culinary'.[42] Pilcher elaborates that various analyses of the traditional conception of the food system have been 'predominantly interested in the analysis of food movement across the entire chain and its impact on the overall production and consumption of the food system'.[43]

[42] Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "Culinary Infrastructure: How facilities and technologies create value and meaning around food". *Global Food History* 2(2), (2016): 107
[43] *Ibid*., 107

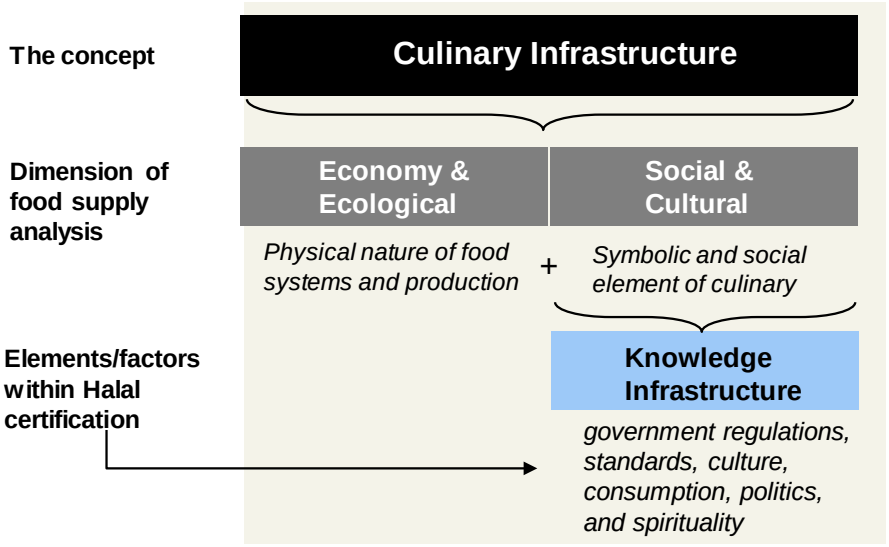


Figure 1-1: Overview of Culinary Infrastructure Concept

Pilcher's argument is that the infrastructure is pivotal as it probes 'fundamental divisions within the interdisciplinary field of food studies between economic and ecological dimensions of food supply and the social and cultural meanings within which they are embedded'[44]. Halal certification is a form of knowledge infrastructure.

Ascertaining critical nodes and linkages of culinary infrastructure is paramount as shown in a study by Irina D. Mihalache on how the committee at the Art Gallery Museum of Toronto uses food to increase the visibility of their museum[45]. Numerous culinary events were organised for creating a knowledge infrastructure, but somehow along the way, it has created a physical infrastructure of food production within the museum. In so doing, the museum was repositioned from an ideological tool to a complex, complicated and connected institution of culinary infrastructure. Mihalache posits 'a new way of experiencing the museum; connecting entertainment with culture and fostering the relationship between the Art Gallery and the city thereby constructing culinary knowledge infrastructure'[46], creating a museum that is a more inclusive

[44] *Ibid*., 107
[45] Irina D. Mihalache. "A Museum's Culinary Life: Women's Committees and Food at the Art Gallery of Toronto". *Global Food History*, 2:2 (2016):157-178
[46] *Ibid.*,172

institution. **H1** points to similar institutional transformation undertaken by states to achieve the intended policy outcomes.

Another analysis on critical linkages, conducted by historian and sociologist Sebastian Gil-Riano and Sarah E. Tracy, is on the human digestive system. They conceptualised what they refer to as the *dietary fiber paradigm* to reflect the importance of dietary fiber to health and disease based on the work of Denis Burkitt and his collaborators. Burkitt hypothesised that the transit time in which food was consumed, digested and emptied could provide the explanation for colonic disorder prevalent among western societies. The significance of Burkitt's studies, according to Gil-Riano and Tracy, corroborates the failure of culinary modernisation in that the architecture of the human digestive tract 'disintegrates with easily digestible carbohydrates food'.[47] This shows that the scope of culinary infrastructure involving food movement at multi-scales even includes digestion within the body. **H1** views the non-physical components within Halal.

In the same vein, Nicole Tarulevicz uses Singapore as an example to argue for popular knowledge as culinary infrastructure in defining the meaning of food safety; that is a '… less structured, more informal body of knowledge about food safety is also infrastructure'.[48] This knowledge infrastructure amalgamates with regulations and public awareness campaigns, for example, '… the construction of food safety, as seen in the varied pages of Singapore's twentieth-century newspapers, worked to frighten consumers, threaten merchants, and prompt the state into regulatory mode'. These elements worked interchangeably across the Singapore food system, 'changing the meaning of food safety'. In this context, Tarulevicz concludes that culinary infrastructure embodies the 'conflicted and contingent, encompassing both continuity and change (and) the resulting popular knowledge'.[49] **H1** analyses public discourses concerning Halal.

[47] Gil-Riano, Sebastian Gil-Riano and Sarah E. Tracy, "Developing Constipation: Dietary Fiber, Western Disease, and Industrial Carbohydrates". *Global Food History*, Vol.2, No.2 (2016):188
[48] Nicole Tarulevicz, "Food Safety as Culinary Infrastructure in Singapore, 1920–1990". *Global Food History*, (2016) 2:2, 133
[49] *Ibid.*, 133.

Is such deliberation enough? I think not. Hereafter, this thesis reflects my motivation to contribute to the important discourse on the culinary infrastructure of Halal certification, including the knowledge infrastructure and trust that has emerged as an interesting subject in determining the value of commodified foods concerning Muslims. The challenge remains in that the integrity of Halal food is validated through neither smell nor appearance, but 'is mainly a question of trust in its certification'.[50] I argue that knowledge infrastructure of trust relies on a collection of many factors, including government regulations, standards, culture, consumption, politics and spirituality. I attempt to delve further into how this nexus is often subject to 'intense political negotiation'.[51] 'Identifying crucial nodes and linkages of culinary' certification 'will expand our understanding of what counts for (Halal food) and who profit from it'[52].

Given the scope limitation of this thesis, it is not possible to cater to all the varying interpretations of the meaning of Halal and the frequent disagreement between countries and societies. Encouragingly however, the dynamic multi-ethnic and multicultural Malay-Chinese-Indian societies in Malaysia and Singapore serve as exemplars of Halal in order to understand and entice wider conclusions as Halal food provision 'is an outcome of the ethnic mixes of the two societies'.[53] It is important to note that this thesis analyses domestic context only and does not include Halal consumption by visiting tourists or expatriates living in the two states. **H1** provides a comprehensive element of knowledge infrastructure within the context of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies.

ii. Claiming trust and authority: Institutionalising Halal Certification

Johan Fischer coined the term Halal Frontier, as a "frontier of knowledge" with two overarching dimensions; firstly, 'it sheds light on a relatively unexplored subject', and secondly, the phrase reflects that 'a better understanding of Halal materiality is

[50] *Ibid.,* 94.
[51] Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "Culinary Infrastructure: How facilities and technologies create value and meaning around food". Global Food History 2(2), (2016): 119.
[52] *Ibid.,* 121.
[53] Joan C. Henderson. "Halal food, certification and halal tourism: Insights from Malaysia and Singapore". *Tourism Management Perspectives* 19 (2016): 161.

required'.[54] The frontier may also be comparable to "urban frontier" – a jungle of complexity outside the direct control of ordered and organised centres of society. Fischer argues that the 'proliferation of modern Halal is entangled in evermore-complex webs of political, economic, religious, ethnic and national significance'[55]. These webs frame everyday Halal consumption, the productive linkages between religion and markets, with elements of production, trade and standards.

Fischer's contribution to the Halal domain is drawn mainly from his anthropological work on contemporary Malaysia and its London diaspora. Therefore, to my view, this could provide disagreement among Muslim-dominated countries like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, who may be critical and unwilling to appreciate the very nature of the Halal food landscape in Malaysia's and Singapore's multi-ethnic and multicultural societies reflected in the anthropological academic sphere. It is worth noting that Fischer's research and its guiding theoretical context is structured on cultural studies in order to complement the various conventional studies related to religiosity and economy. **H2** points to motivating factors for states to bureaucratise the Halal certification system.

Gordon P. Means argues that religion has contributed to the Malays' increasing desire to create a community that has both economic and political power.[56] He elaborates that, unlike Protestant Ethic, as argued by Max Weber, Islam does not appear to create among Muslims the 'world asceticism' or the 'compulsion to save' in the form of economic competition and hard work.[57] Is such cynicism totally accepted? I would disagree, especially noting that Weber's argument is based on savings by the Malays that mainly go into noneconomic purposes such as *Haj*[58] and religious festivals. As posited by Ali

[54] Johan Fischer. *The Halal frontier: Muslim Consumers in a Globalized Mark*et. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 5.
[55] *Ibid*., 11.
[56] Gordon P. Means *The Role of Islam in the Political Development of Malaysia*. New York.
[57] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London, 1930), 155-183. Weber attempted to search for the disparity in economic success between the nations of Northern Europe and much of the rest of the world. He referred his analysis on cultural perspective since these nations did not possess any clear advantage in terms of population or natural resources. He argued that certain aspects of Protestant theology were conducive to the formation of a proto-capitalist economic ideology, so that people whose beliefs had been shaped by the Protestant worldview were better positioned to take advantage of the emerging industrial economy than were their counterparts in other nations.
[58] *Haj* is an annual pilgrimage to Mecca, a mandatory religious duty for Muslims that must be carried out at least once in a lifetime.

and Al-Owaihan, some findings from Weber's Protestant Ethic appear to be consistent with the existence of an Islamic work ethic that promotes hard work for communal rather than individual gain.[59]

This philosophy reflects the consociationalism democracy theory by renowned political theorist, Arend Lijphart, when seen together with the approach undertaken by the secular state of Singapore to pacify the minority, yet sensitive, Malay Muslim community[60], and the approach by the Malaysian state to negotiate the upsurge of Islamism in the 1970s. Malaysia was a country where the techniques and practices of consociational democracy were used effectively to maintain ethnic peace and political stability.[61] In essence, the theory describes political actions taken by leadership to keep the peace in, and stabilise an (often deeply) divided society by way of power sharing.

The colonial experience of both Singapore and Malaysia is, of course, crucially influential. As Suzana Kadir states, '… the tension between secularism and Islam are tied to colonial experience and the nationalist struggles'.[62] A key legacy is the racial governmentality of the colonial state 'made through the melding, hybridising and multiplying ethnic landscapes of Malaya with the racial grid of Chinese, Malay, Indian and others'.[63] Even after the departure of the British colonials 'this grid has remained consistent and integral to the workings of government' with a 'strong impact on local identities' and 'becomes the foundation of national identity'.[64] Whilst this might bode well for building the progressive nations, sociologist P.S. Goh argues, '... the racial grid has become a divisive trap and support for rigidified ethnic sentiments undermining

[59] Ali, A. J., & Al-Owaihan, A. Islamic worth ethic: A critical review. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, *15*(1) (2008):7. They argued that unlike work ethic in Judaism and Christianity, Islamic work ethic has been misunderstood or ignored in management and organisation studies. They suggested that Islam has viewed commercial activities not only as a divine calling but also a necessary aspect of human life, a source of social gratification and psychological pleasure.
[60] Singapore's immediate neighbour Indonesia and Malaysia have got majority Malays population hence leaders in Singapore keep reminding the Singaporean about their concern regarding the Singaporean Malays loyalty in the event of a war against their fellow Singaporean.
[61] Arend Lijphart. Democracy in Plural Society: a comparative exploration: Yale UP, Yale (1977) :153.
[62] Suzana Kadir. "Islam, State and Society in Singapore". *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*. Vol. 5 Issue 3 (2004) :358.
[63] P.S. Goh, M. Gabriel Pillai, P. Holden, C.K. Gaik. *Race and Multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore*. London: Routledge. 2009:213.
[64] *Ibid*., 213.

multiracialism'. In contrast, anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler argues that 'racial discourses can and do harness themselves with frequent success to progressive ones'.[65] Indeed, Singapore's vision of multiculturalism as posited by Chua Boon Huat, 'translates into a powerful instrument of social control' because it helps to maintain 'a major political administrative and everyday obsession that casts a long repressive restraint on the politicization of difference, including class differences'.[66] This has been designed to serve what N. Vasu defines as the 'hard multiculturalism'[67] model, which Singapore inculcated after its split from Malaysia in 1965.

Figure 1-2: News of separation of Singapore from Malaysia as reported by various newspapers

After the separation, the fledgling Singapore had to take the necessary steps to maintain peace and stability, as reported in various mainstream media at that time (see figure 1-2), leaving them as a lone island with almost zero natural resources to kick start their economic activities. As Eugene K.B. Tan states, the responsible administration 'selectively co-opted and harnessed the potential of religion in driving its state-building

[65] Ann Laura Stoler. "Racial Histories and their Regimes of Truth" Political Power and Social Theory, (1997) Vol 11: 192.
[66] Chua B.H. "Political culturalism, representation and the people's action party of Singapore" *Democratisation* 14: 925.
[67] Vasu, N. "Encountering terrorism: Multiculturalism and Singapore". Asian Ethnicity (2008) 9:17-32

objectives'[68], such as the establishment of the Administration of Muslim Law Act 1965[69], leading to the formation of Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) in 1968. **H2** suggests state survival through their intervention in religion.

Meanwhile, the wave of Islamic revivalism in the 1970s dominated countries with sizeable Muslim populations, including Malaysia. This brought significant changes to the landscape of the Malay-Muslim populace in Malaysia, as suggested by Hussin Mutalib, affecting many aspects of their lives, 'politically, socially and economically'.[70] William R. Roff refers to this as the 'concrete form of Islamisation'.[71] According to Azmi Aziz and A.B. Shamsul, the state responded diligently through 'setting up of Islamic institutions of various kinds'[72] i.e. Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM). The ongoing process of Islamisation in the administration has been monitored by the Islamic Consultative Council, one of the powerful committees formed by the Prime Minister to propose policies on the Islamisation programmes. Further, it reinforces Malaysia as being 'ethnicised to become a signifier of Malayness and unambiguous Malay identity'.[73] The Malay political elite were well aware of the importance of maintaining a hegemonic system of control and racial dominance; hence the emphasis on projecting the image of Islamic promoters to secure the Malay support, while at the same time working on the economic growth trajectory to entice the wider moderate Malaysians. This lead to **H2** in that 'the economy thus fused with a politics of ethnicity that in itself was defined in terms of religion'.[74] Johan Fischer's hypothesis that state promotion of Halal among Malays in Malaysia and on the global stage – can be seen as a form of boycott encouraging Muslim consumers to buy locally manufactured and

[68] Eugene K.B Tan, "Keeping God in place: the management of religion in Singapore", in *Religious Diversity in Singapore*, ed. Lai Ah Eng (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008): 66-67
[69] Lili Zubaidah Rahim. "Governing Muslims in Singapore's secular authoritarian state". *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 66:2, (2012):172.
[70] Hussin Mutalib. "Islam in Malaysia, From revivalism to Islamic State" *Singapore University Press* (1993): 3.
[71] William R. Roff. "Pattern of Islamization in Malaysia, 1890s – 1990s: Exemplars, Institutions, and Vectors". *Journal of Islamic Studies* 9:2 (1998): 221.
[72] Azmi Aziz & A.B. Shamsul. "The religious, the plural, the secular and the modern: a brief critical survey on Islam in Malaysia" *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Volume 5, Number 3, 2004.
[73] Johan Fischer, "Proper Islamic Consumption: Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia," NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph series, No. 113, 2008: 43.
[74] A.B. Shamsul. "The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism – The socio-historical roots of the NEP and its contemporary implications" *The Developing Economies* XXXV-3 Sept 1997 :43.

state-certified Halal products.[75] Halal is well placed and promoted as bridging the religious and the secular, and as an example of the compatibility of the ethnicised state. **H2** positions Halal in the intersection between a multitude of social and religious transformations.

That impetus to globalise Halal started when both states 'certified, standardised and bureaucratised Halal production, trade, and consumption in a way that made it possible to extend these standards abroad'.[76] According to James Scott, standardisation is an attempt to standardise production, trade, and consumption to achieve legibility and simplification. The standards serve as 'instruments of control and forms of regulation attempting to generate elements of global order'[77]. They 'generate and reinvigorate social norms and directives'[78] and 'may evoke ideas of similarity and uniformity – the standardised is that which supposedly is similar and follows rules'.[79] Such rules also 'specify what is proper behaviour, and ideas of appropriateness thus become associated with standardisation; the standard way of doing things is often understood not only as of the most usual but also the generally accepted, normal and even best way'.[80] Halal standard derives from a combination of several factors, including the five *mazhabs*, 'science, industry, *ummah* and *syariah*'.[81] As a result of varying Halal standards and requirements across the world, 'a plethora of state and non-state certifiers struggle over

[75] Johan Fischer, "Muslim consumption and anti-consumption in Malaysia", *Journal of Islamic Research*, Vol. 9, Issue 2, (2015):68-87. In this article, Johan Fischer shared the political and cultural effects of the Islamic opposition in Malaysia call to boycott US goods, one month after the September 11 occurred in New York. The boycotting of US goods was due to war in Afghanistan and American support for the Israeli oppression of the Palestinians. Prime Minister Mahathir rejected the call for boycott arguing it was irrational harmful and unpatriotic. Instead, he launched his festival season call to spend more, at the back of Malaysia multicultural society with its celebration of numerous festivities.
[76] Florence Bergeaud-Blackler, Johan Fischer and John Lever "Halal Matters: Islam, politics and markets in global perspective", *Routledge Taylor & Francis Group* 2016:8.
[77] Brunsson, Nils and Jakobsson, Bengt. "A world of standards". Oxford and New York. Oxford University Press. 2000:1.
[78] *Ibid*., 14.
[79] *Ibid*., 14.
[80] *Ibid.*, 15.
[81] Darhim Dali Hashim, "OIC Nations should have common Halal certifying body," interview by Farah Ahmadnawi, *Halalfocus.net*, August 3, 2009.
'Mazhab' is Muslim school of thought within Islamic jurisprudence. Rulings of the four 'Mazhab' namely Maliki, Hambali, Shafei and Hanafi are followed across all Muslims without exclusive regional restrictions.

authority and credibility'.[82] Rosa E. Rios, Hernan E. Riquelme and Yasser Abdelaziz suggest '… the proliferation of institutions and countries that grant Halal certification has grown considerably over the past ten years with the end result of confusing consumers and companies'.[83] For example, in Australia, the Department of Agriculture listed at least 25 Islamic organisations issuing certifications.[84]

The above narration demonstrates the significance of this thesis to the sphere of Halal discourse, shifting away from the conventional study of the market and industry potential. Further, it provides insight on state motivation behind legislating religious law, sponsoring religious entities and promoting their activities. I argue that the temptation to institutionalise Halal certification as an apparatus of the state and so overcome political and social challenges has created a comparably more structured Halal infrastructure and shaped varying outcomes. In Malaysia, Halal regulation serves as a conduit 'of a larger process by the state to nationalise Islam'.[85] Whereas the Singapore state promotes Halal to 'curtail the potential religious institutions and groups to mobilise against the authoritarian state'.[86] The implementation, however, in certain instances, went beyond the nature of religion itself.

iii. Culture and Consumption

Pierre Bourdieu's 1984 *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* provides a debatable comment on class and consumption: '… scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education'.[87] His work indicates that all cultural practices and preferences are closely linked to educational level and secondarily to social origin. Is such a conclusion totally correct? If we read Johan Fischer's 2008 *Proper Islamic Consumption: Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia*, we unearth the transcendental: '… the Malay Muslim class factions most of

[82] Johan Fischer. "Markets, religion, regulation: Kosher, halal and Hindu vegetarianism in a global perspective". *Geoforum* Vol. 69 (2016): 69.
[83] Rios, Rosa E., Hernan E. Riquelme, Hernan E., Abdel, Yasser. "Do halal certification country of origin and brand name familiarity matter*?" Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics,* (2014):669.
[84] Information as at 22 Feb 2019.
[85] Johan Fischer. "Halal Sanitised: Health and Science in a Globalised Religious Market". *Forfatteren og Tidsskrift for Islamforskning*, nr.1(2010) nr.1:40.
[86] Lily Zubaidah Rahim. "Governing Muslims in Singapore's secular authoritarian state". *Australian Journal of International Affairs, 66:2, (2012)*:182.
[87] Pierre Bourdieu 1984, 1.

all emerge from ideas and practices of proper Islamic consumption in cultural intimacy'. Without taking divergent understandings and practices of Islamic consumption, modern Malay Muslim identity is unimaginable, even incomprehensible.[88] Fischer states:

> The nationalisation of Islam and *Halalisation*[89] may be all about creating, fixing and maintaining the religious as a material base, the thingness in enjoyment […]. The emergence of an ontology of Islamic consumption has infused discursive Islam in Malaysia with an immensely powerful ability to syncretise politics, state, authority and morality […]. For purist Malays, Halalisation has caused a deep concern with Halalised piety. […] Middle-class Malays work hard to demonstrate how the particularities of their visions are compatible with religious capitalism and modernity.[90]

This lends credence to the hypothesis that consumption preferences and practices among Malay Muslims are symptomatic of increasing religious acculturation, reinforced by the desire to create national and Malay dominance. Whilst it is commonly known that the responsibility of government to consumers covers the 'right to be informed, as well as the right to be heard'[91], the proponents of religious consumerism, argue that it is part of 'the government's responsibility to educate and disperse Halal awareness in the society'.[92] This is why Malay Muslim consumerism in Malaysia is subject to 'intense political and religious contestation'[93], exploitation, rumors, and speculations.

Issues surrounding food, especially issues that are 'linked to religious and health factors have been given attention by the government'; this is especially in the area where the 'more Islamic consumption is practiced in a society, the more the authority of Halal is

[88] Johan Fischer. *Proper Islamic Consumption: Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia.* NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph series, No. 113, 2008 :227.
[89] *Halalisation* is an example of embedding Islam in a series of everyday practices that necessitate reference to basic principles.
[90] *Ibid* 232, 236
[91] Richard H. Buskirk and James T. Rothe 'Consumerism- An Interpretation' *Journal of Marketing* Vol34 October 1970: 63
[92] (Aiedah Abdul Khalek and Ros Aiza Mohd Mokhtar, 2017, 242)
[93] Johan Fischer. *Proper Islamic Consumption: Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia.* NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph series, No. 113, 2008 :35

given to the government'.[94] Nonetheless, this can cause disagreement among Muslims in different geographic settings in Malaysia as Malaysia and Singapore dietary habits are found to differ among those who lived in urban centers and those in rural environments.[95]

Nasir and Pereira posit that Malay Muslims in Singapore adopt a 'defensive dining'[96] approach to maintain their Halal practices within non-Halal contexts. They argue that by practicing such an approach, the Malay Muslims are able to partake fully in Singaporean multicultural social life.[97] This practice means whilst they remained steadfast to Islamic dietary requirements, they were also pragmatic enough to accept that they could observe their religious expectations by taking a few precautions when eating out. Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, Alexius A. Pereira and Bryan S. Turner coined the phrase 'rituals of intimacy'[98] as a guide in understanding the balancing act between sustaining group and individual identities.

Halal certification becomes the enabler for social integration as it encourages the Malays to be creative in their socialising process. However, the study by Nasir and Pereira is limited to a small sample of selected middle-class Malay Muslim groups, hence further observation is needed to fully understand overall Muslim consumption practices. The result may be different if we include the low-income Malays who share facilities and spaces with other ethnic groups in Housing Development Board (HDB) flats.

Rahim argues that Malays are represented as 'endowed with traits of complacency, indolence, apathy, infused with a love of leisure and an absence of motivation and

[94] *Ibid*
[95] (Cecilia Y. Leong-Salobir, 2011, 17).
[96] A study by Nasir & Pereira based on interview with thirty tertiary-educated, middle-class Muslims Malays in Singapore. They found all respondents displayed a strong 'halal consciousnesses, preferring to abstain from eating if they held even the slightest doubt about the halal status or certification of a particular food. They indicated a preference for Malay cooks and kitchen staff out of fear of contamination and the overall Halal environment when dining outside. They adopted avoidance strategy when this was not possible.
[97] Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir & Alexius A. Pereira, 'Defensive dining: notes on the public dining experiences in Singapore' Cont Islam (2008) 2:61–73.
[98] Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, Alexius A. Pereira and Bryan S. Turner, *Muslims in Singapore: Piety, Politics and Policies* (London: Routledge, 2010), 16.

discipline'.[99] Halal food conjures something more than religious obligations; as posited by Gabriele Marranci, Halal plays as a marker of identity and remains the only[100] sphere for Malays to be in control where the state and other ethnicities are required to accommodate their requests.

This thesis concludes that religion influences consumption regardless of whether it is in a majority or minority Muslim environment. As suggested by Johan Fischer, the Malaysian state acted to become the guiding force in championing Halal development with a two-pronged objective: first, nurturing nationalist consumerism (he refers to 'patriotic consumption' and 'shopping for the state')[101], and second, enforcing ethnic dominance. This shows a similarity between Malaysia and Singapore in regards to the role of the state in spearheading Halal consumption. In Singapore, the state 'bureaucratisation of race' engineered after their separation from Malaysia serves to create harmony and stability. A number of studies indicate that plain stereotypes on race and religion are prevalent, of which, the Malays are often associated with negativity. A study by Nasir and Pereira reveals a pertinent aspect of Halal consumption by Malays in Singapore, which is that they adapt and integrate themselves within the mainstream, mainly Chinese. Religion then becomes an important marker of identity and a significant tool for self-control and self-grouping that enhances their sense of identity, albeit in a highly regulated environment.

Structure of this thesis

This thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter 1 has outlined the profile of the study, which includes the general introduction of the thesis; the hypothesis and rationale behind it; the research questions; the methodology of the research; and the conceptual framework as guiding principles for the thesis. Chapter 2 provides an understanding of the background of race-based politics and the significance of race and religion to the

[99] (Rahim 1998, 49).
[100] Gabriele Marranci 'Defensive or offensive dining' Halal dining practices among Malay Muslim Singaporeans and their effects on integration' *The Australian Journal of Anthropology (2012) 23:* 93
State has provided regulations and limitations on other religious matters such as the *tudung* (Islamic scarf)
[101] Johan Fischer, *Proper Islamic Consumption: Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia* NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph series, No. 11310 (2008), 8.

states of Singapore and Malaysia. In doing so, it highlights some of the significant historical milestones shared between the two states, particularly during colonial times. It historicises the context of colonial discourse towards Islam and Malay culture and the ramifications for socio-political structure, including the origins of ethnicity, religiosity and nationalism. It also attempts to establish the theoretical support for the thesis argument, exploring the different motivations for the states' Halal agendas. Chapter 3 explores the discussion on how states express and articulate their Halal agenda in the form of an institutional framework, structure, governance and the accompanying industry support system. Chapter 4 offers a discussion on the demand-side of Halal to provide understanding about the acceptance by consumers and ascertain how businesses navigate their production and operations to comply with Halal requirements. This chapter also reveals the different consumption approaches by purist and pragmatic Malays as reflected by their religious profile and practice. It includes an examination of the approach by the Malays that use Halal consumption as an important marker of their culture and identity. Finally, Chapter 5 shares the salient points of the thesis in the concluding remarks and suggests prospective areas for further research as an extension of this study.

CHAPTER 2: ISLAM AND MALAY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Any analysis of contemporary Malaysia and Singapore must include consideration of the historical context of colonial discourse as it relates both to Islam and to Malay communities. This chapter moves through the twentieth century outlining the often-complex context in which these states emerged.

A study on scenario created by the colonial masters is key in explaining the outcomes of their relentless activities in unearthing and exploiting the wealth of Malaysia and Singapore in the 19th and 20th centuries. I focus mainly on British colonisation during the 1930s; Japanese occupation in the 1940s; then British de-colonisation or pre-independence in the 1950s and '60s followed by the period after independence – 1957 and 1965 to the present. The impacts of this colonisation remain, even after independence.

Colonial rule in the Malay Peninsula began of course with the Portuguese occupation in Malacca in 1511 and the subsequent Dutch colonialisation (1641–1824). However, these endeavours did not extend beyond the state of Malacca, where Islam was first introduced, and therefore did not affect the socio-political structure of the rest of the Malay states. My particular interest is the relationship of the ethnic Malay people to Islam, which I believe will lend support to my position on certification of Halal and also continue the interesting discourse as posited by A.B. Shamsul that Malaysia is fraught with historical and especially political significance, which has changed over time and remains constantly contested and challenged.[102] (In this thesis: *Malay* is both an adjective and noun referring to the ethnic Malay people, their language and culture; *Malaya* is the former country, mainly in the southern part of the Malay Peninsula, that originally included Singapore; and *Malaysia* is the federated country of Malaysia.)

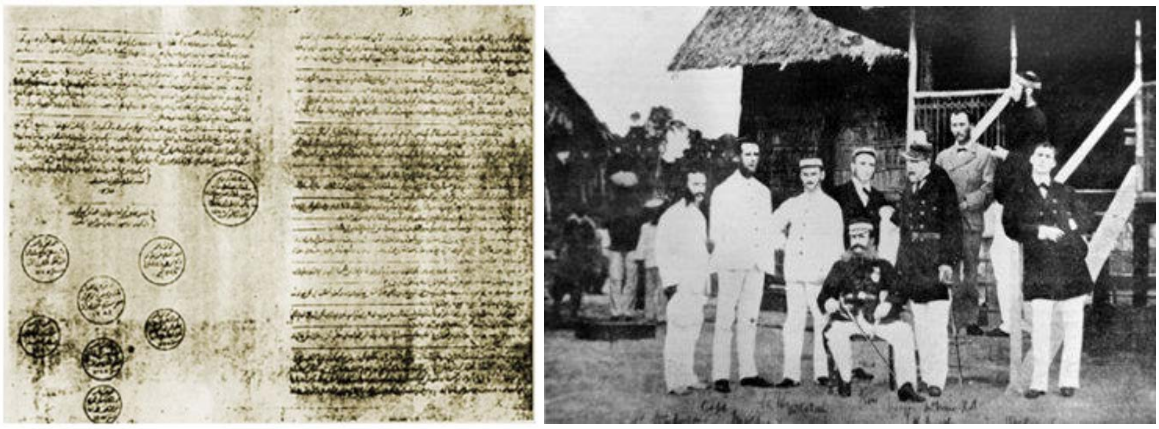
[102] A.B. Shamsul, "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of 'Malayness' in Malaysia Reconsidered", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32 (3) (2001):361.

i. British Colonialism (1874 - 1942)

Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljunied, in discussing the writing of a Malay intellectual and activist, Dr. Burhanuddin Al-Helmy (1911–1969), echoed several causes that brought about the ascendance of colonialism in the Malay world.[103] Among the causes is the treason of the political elites – the Malay royalty, who in order to protect their personal interests had sought the help and protection of the British to ensure that the trade and security of their country were kept safe from any threats. Malaya, comprising Peninsular Malaya and Singapore during this era, was not a single state, but rather multiple governments consisting of various sultanates. Leaders of state, known as sultans were the ultimate rulers, taking vital roles as the political and religious heads of their respective states.

A significant milestone in the history of Malaysia was recorded on 20 January 1874, when the Sultan of Perak signed the Pangkor Treaty that signaled official British involvement in the Malays' politics and fulfilled the colonial quest for wealth creation. The immediate repercussion, however, was that the sultans were compelled to accept British advisers, known as Residents, in their states. These British Residents became the effective rulers of the Malay states, leaving the sultans to handle matters related to religion, traditions and customs – matters that reflected an aristocratic system. Arguably, there was minimal resistance over British encroachment from the masses, a reflection on the 'long period of victimisation imposed on the masses by their own feudal chiefs and masters'.[104] The Malays tolerated this colonialism, especially on the understanding that it was 'indirect rather than direct' in nature.[105]

[103] Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "A theory of colonialism in the Malay world," *Postcolonial Studies*, 14: 1, (2011):7.
[104] Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "The Impact of British Colonialism on Malaysian Islam: An interpretive Account" in *Islam and the Modern Age*, ed. Akhtarul Wasey (Zakir Hussain Insitute of Islamic Studies,2004), 22.
[105] Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Malay Anti-Colonialism in British Malaya" *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 2007:373.



Source: Arkib Negara Malaysia

Figure 2-1: British officials involved during the 1874 Pangkor Treaty. Amongst the officers are J.W.W. Birch (fourth from right) and Frank Swettenham (standing rightmost).

However, as argued by A.B. Shamsul, the British colonialism was not only a matter of superior weapons, political and diplomatic shrewdness, and economic energy; it was also a cultural invasion in the form of a conquest of the native 'epistemological space'. According to Shamsul:

> The British interfered with the local thought system, and by doing this they increasingly disempowered the natives by limiting their ability to define their world; subsequently, the local order of things was replaced by a foreign one, a slow but steady process that has effectively been conducted through a systemic application of a number of so-called 'investigative modalities'.[106]

The policy of 'indirect rule' proved an instant success in assuring the Malays that they were still subjects of their Malay rulers rather than of the 'infidel' colonisers; it hardly occurred to them that their de facto rulers were the British.[107] The approach used by the British was a 'mild, just and firm despotism and deference to constituted authority'.[108] In my view, this clearly reflects the British understanding of servility and blind loyalty of the Malays towards their sultans. Interestingly, this feudal system was eventually

[106] A.B. Shamsul, "A History of an Identity, an Identity of a History: The Idea and Practice of 'Malayness' in Malaysia Reconsidered", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, (2001) 32 (3), 357.
[107] *Ibid.*
[108] Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*. (London: Macmillan, 1982), 175-176.

contested by the Islamic value system, as posited by Shaharuddin Maaruf, who held that Islam challenged Malay feudal structure and provided an alternate value orientation for Malay society:

> In the cultural history of the Malays and development of Malay thought, ideas and worldview have not been wholly monopolised by feudal psychology and orientations. For many decades and even before the colonising Westerners began to spread their power and influence, feudal psychology and orientations have had to compete with another system of thought and value orientation, that is, Malay humanism ... while feudal values are anchored in the concept and belief of ruler-mythical elements, Malay humanism shifted its value orientation to one basic foundation, of which its values are autonomous, independent and universal. This proved to be a major shift in paradigm and way of thinking that led to shaping a value system that is solid, complete, holistic and independent. This radical paradigm shift is always contained in the words and verses of honour to Allah . . .[109]

Johan Fisher's 2008, *Proper Islamic Consumption - Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia* suggests that Islam has been the dominant force in shaping the life of the Malays, including their identity formation.[110] The Malays have been defending the dignity of Islam and the Muslim even during the anti-colonial uprising instigated by the Malay elites infuriated by the British tax collection system.[111] This anti-colonial uprising was arguably inspired by the concept of *jihad* (holy war), perhaps motivated by fighting against the 'infidel colonialist'. For instance, the Battle of Sungei Ujong between the British army and armed bands who were seen on one occasion carrying the Turkish flag as an indication of their Pan-Islamic influences.[112] There were various factors (internal

[109] Shaharuddin Maaruf, *Menyingkap Abdi Menggilap Peribadi*, trans. Norhaslinda Muhamad Zuber, "Singapore Malay Identity: A Study of dominant perceptions of Islam in post-independence Singapore" (PhD diss., National University of Singapore 2010), 50.
[110] Fischer, Proper Islamic Consumption - Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia, 8-17.
[111] Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Malay Anti-Colonialism in British Malaya". *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. Vol 42 (5):374-75.
[112] Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*. (London: Macmillan, 1982), 163.

and external) leading to the increased awareness and enthusiasm towards Islam, but these are not in the scope or period of the present study.

Despite occasional rebellions, the British persisted in executing their plan to consolidate several states for their economic gain. The result, in 1896, was the formation of the Federated Malay States comprising Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Selangor and Pahang – that later became the largest suppliers of rubber and tin to the world.[113] Even prior to that, however, through a string of treaties with various other sultans, Britain had acquired the protectorates of Kedah, Perlis, Johor, Kelantan and Terengganu, which eventually became collectively known as the Unfederated Malay States. Likewise, the Straits Settlements, established under the control of the British East India Company in 1826, were classified on 1 April 1867 to include Penang, Malacca and Singapore and administered as a Crown colony under the direct supervision of the Colonial Office Administration in London. Singapore, which was made the capital, had been earlier obtained from the Netherlands through the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824. This treaty was significant to the creation of Malaysia and Indonesia.

Much economic growth occurred during the British colonial period, primarily due to the success of rubber plantation crops. Malaya was transformed from a colonial woodland into the golden goose of the empire, applauded by Paul H. Kratoska '... as an exceptionally prosperous colonial territory'.[114] Historical evidence suggests that by 1929 Malaya attained the highest per capita GDP of any country (or territory) in Asia. This income was fed by the expansion of the global automobile industry, including in the USA, creating huge demand for tyres manufactured from rubber sourced from Malaya.

The vast profits collected from rubber and mining made possible a stream of social progress, including a pension scheme accorded by the British to the Malay ruling class in

[113] The system is known as Residential System, an official intervention policy where British resident is appointed to advice the Sultans in administrative and government related matters excluding Islam and the Malay customs. Among the objectives are to protect British interest such as providing safety and more trading opportunities for their merchants, imposing taxation and revenue collection systems, exploit tin mining and other resources.
[114] Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, A Social and Economic History, (*London: Hurst & Company,1998).

exchange for political and economic control, but not for their symbolic religious role. Other profits were channeled towards development of physical infrastructure, including roads, railways, seaports, schools, telecommunications and electricity. Roads and railways were necessary to encourage the growth of rubber and tin industries, enabling communication and mobilisation of capital and labor. Clearly, the development that was carried out focused only on west to east transport, while neglecting Borneo (Sabah and Sarawak), clear evidence about the real motive behind the infrastructure investment. Even today, this explains why the current economic progress of west coast states is higher than that of the east coast.

By the late 1920s, Singapore had become one of the world's most important ports, with voluminous transacted trade covering all sorts of goods and attracting massive immigration from Southern China. The first group to settle in was the Peranakan Chinese, descendants of the Chinese who had immigrated to Malacca and Riau earlier and married local Malay women. The Chinese continue to dominate the population in Singapore today. The Malays were the second largest ethnic group followed by the Indian. Unlike in other states, the Straits Settlements did not recognise Islam as an official religion.

The British promoted the development of not just Singapore, but other Straits Settlements and ruled them into the world's commercial and trading empire with tremendous growth in wealth, trade and population. Singapore and Penang were accorded free trade status (fewer trade restrictions), further reinforced by the security provided by the Royal Navy. Traveller Benjamin Morell expressed the following:

> For the short period it has been in existence, Singapore is, without an exception, the most thriving colony which the British have in the East Indies; being admirably situated for all the purposes of trade, and is in fact, a central depot for the commerce of the Chinese and Javanese seas.[115]

[115] See A Splendid Little Colony – British Singapore 1818-1963 https://www.britishempire.co.uk/article/splendidlittlecolony.htm.

The ramifications of the great demand for rubber and minerals in Malaya created the need for a larger and cheaper labor force. Hence the countermeasure by the colonial government of bringing in labor from China and India for the growing economy. Similarly, in Borneo States, economic progress attracted Chinese immigrants, and by 1939, the Chinese population reached about one-fourth of the total state population. The immediate British action of bringing in immigrants, as stated by Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljunied based on Dr. Burhanuddin's literature, was to 'sustain their control over the Malay world with the sole aim of grabbing a lion's share of the commerce in the region'.[116] In fact, as posited by Yeo Kim Wah's 1982 *The Politics of Decentralisation: Colonial Controversy in Malaya 1920-1929* by 1920 Britain had 'acquired effective control and direction of every state and settlement in Malaya'.[117] An important consequence of this massive flow of foreign labour was that it transformed the culinary heritage of Malaya and Singapore into a multicultural mix of Malay, Chinese, Indian and others.

It is widely known that British socio-economic policies were designed to solidify their footprint by driving a wedge between the ethnic groups within the country. Malays were confined to the rural areas where they worked in paddy fields and were surrounded by poverty; whereas Chinese and Indians were the trading class and lived more privileged lives. In the Borneo states, typically, Malays were in government or fishing, Chinese in trade and labor, and the Iban (non-Muslim indigenous people) were in the police force. To preserve their interest, the British established the Malayan Civil Service (MCS) in 1919 based in Singapore, and recruited a number of English-educated Malay elite as civil servants. Later in 1920 the MCS evolved into the Administrative and Diplomatic Service (ADS), generally described as 'elite' and 'prestigious', serving as a feeder for all senior administration officials to the federal and state levels. This marked the beginning of Malay elites entrance into public services.

[116] Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "A theory of colonialism in the Malay world," *Postcolonial Studies*, (2011) 14: 1, 16.
[117] Wah, The Politics of Decentralisation: Colonial Controversy in Malaya 1920-1929,

During the 1930s, economic progress was short-lived by the unprecedented global economic depression. Malaya's rubber and mining industries, both dependant on international market forces, collapsed, causing a major blow to the British colonial government. The immigrant workers who lost their jobs were forced to return home or seek employment elsewhere, while the Malays were on the verge of poverty, and some were, as posited by K. Nadaraja '... worse off than the immigrant communities'.[118] There was also growing Malay resentment of the overwhelming presence of Chinese and Indian workers in their land. The myth of British invincibility was soon destroyed by the Japanese invasion of Malaya.

ii. Japanese Occupation (1942 - 1945)

Unlike the British colonial project, the World War Two Japanese occupation of Malaya and Singapore from 1942 to 1945 was strategic rather than economic. The intention was to bring Japan into an integrated Greater East Asian (*Dai Toa*) economic zone, with Japan as a leader in the economic alliance. This was part of the New World Order, a plan to address Japan's socioeconomic policies that were in place since 1938 and built as a reaction to the trade barriers they encountered in the Dutch, American and British colonial rules in Asia. Under the Order, Japan's socioeconomic and political interests were emphasised at the expense of the indigenous communities that came under its military power. Scholars suggest that it was unclear as to how the colonies would benefit from such a policy. For example, Paul H. Kratoska states:

> … the proposition of linking industrial centers in north-eastern Asia with suppliers of raw materials and petroleum products in south-eastern Asia, and with large population centers in China and the Indonesian archipelago that could supply labor and provide markets, seemed sound in theory, but Japan made little headway in building its co-prosperity sphere.[119]

[118] K. Nadaraja, "Malay reaction to the 1930s economic depression in Malaya", *Jebat Volume 43 (1) (July 2016)*: 58.
[119] Paul H. Kratoska, The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, A Social and Economic History, London: Hurst & Company, (1998).

Various scholars suggest that at an early stage of Japan's Malayan Military Administration (MMA), there was no evidence of a favorable policy on Malay Islam[120]. Instead, they embarked on a non-interference stance on religions and their local cultures. However, exploitation of Islam was prevalent from their two sponsored Islamic conferences held in Singapore in April 1943 and Perak in December 1944. According to Abu Talib Ahmad, the first conference was intended to 'fix and carry out certain duties regarding the building and establishment of the *Dai Toa Kyoeiken* (meaning "Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere") and uniting all the races and nations in East Asia.[121] During the first conference, Marquis Tokugawa, the MMA advisor, persuaded the delegates that the future of Islam and the Malays depended on the ultimate victory of Japan in the ongoing war. At the close of the conference, the delegates pledged their unity to serve Dai Nippon so that the aim of the holy war will be realised.[122] The second conference signified further effort by Japan's MMA to use Islam in their propaganda. In the opening speech by Fujimura Masuzo, he demanded the Malay to sacrifice and solidify efforts to defend East Asia and the Malays homeland.[123]

Although the Japanese policy and approach were, in general, favourable towards the ethnic Malay, to the Malayan Chinese they were repressive. Long before their occupation of Southeast Asia, Japan was at war with China. The Malayan and Singaporean Chinese were probably the most politically conscious ethnic groups. For example, after the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the Chinese organised a national salvation movement where they boycotted Japanese products and gave large donations to the Nationalist Government of China; they supported Britain against the Axis Powers in the War in Europe.[124] Their political alliance with the British gave them much-needed assistance when they decided

[120] One of the scholarly works was Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy Towards the Malayan Chinese 1941-1945," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Sep., 1970):61-89.
[121] Ahmad, "Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya during the Occupation: A Reassessment,"112.
[122] PAJ 102/03, 'Ucapan Ketua Perjumpaan Agong Wakil2 Islam Malai and Sumatra', translated by Abu Talib Ahmad.
[123] Pejabat Kathi Besar Johor 257/2604, *'Uchapan nasihat daripada Guinseikan'* translated by Abu Talib Ahmad.
[124] See Yoji Akashi, 'Japanese Policy Towards the Malayan Chinese 1941-1945', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol 1, No. 2 (1970) Cambridge University Press pp. 61-89.

to establish the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA[125]), and the British army had already provided them with a considerable amount of arms and other logistical support to wage guerrilla war against the Japanese.

The Japanese, known for their strategic and tactical war acumen, made the Malays 'a chosen instrument'.[126] They encouraged the Malays to be politically active and urgently released political prisoners from the British era (mainly among the left wing) to revive Kesatuan Melayu Malaya (KMM). Various studies point to this as a surge of Malay nationalism[127]. A notion of *Melayu Raya* (meaning Greater Malaysia) was supported and the political struggle of KMM was encouraged by the Japanese. Another provocative act by the Japanese colonial power was revival of the policy of divide-and-rule as had occurred under the previous British administration in relation to the Malayan and Singaporean communities. From this period onward, the repercussions from growing hostility between the Malays and the Chinese paved the way for deepening racial tension and political conflict between them.

The social implications of this Japanese differential treatment accorded to the races lead to a wider gap between them; the Malays were placed as police and army personnel, whilst the Indians were deployed to the Thai-Burmese border to construct the infamous railway. However, as pointed out by Paul Kratoska, people 'of all races' suffered under the Japanese[128]: some of the Malays were sent to Thailand to build the Death Railway; Indians were pressured to join the Indian National Army (INA), and some who refused were killed; the Eurasians suffered because they resembled Europeans, and some were imprisoned or sent to the Death Railway; the Chinese, however, suffered the most due to their involvement in helping China to fight against Japan.

[125] MPAJA was established by the Malayan Communist Party during the war with the support and assistance from the British Army. Both the MPAJA and MCP managed to get sympathy from the Chinese community.
[126] See William H Elsbres 'Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movement 1940-1945' Harvard University Press:149.
[127] Sample studies include Tsung-Rong Edwin Yang (1998) on the impact of the Japanese occupation on ethnic relations between Chinese and Indigenous People in Malaya and Indonesia in the 1940s, Sydney, Paul H. Kratoska.
[128] Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, A Social and Economic History,* London: Hurst & Company, (1998).

Racial conflict within and among ethnic groups erupted due to growing economic difficulty and selective suppression; in Malaya, the Malays and Chinese realised British weaknesses while in northern Borneo the rule of Brookes and of the North Borneo Company was destabilised. A single Malayan Union was formed in 1946 amalgamating all the Malayan territories except Singapore, removing state autonomy and according equal political and citizenship rights to non-Malays.

Singapore, too, was ruled by the Japanese at this time, and fear of a Chinese rebellion prompted mass killings of Singaporean Chinese. An operation known as Sook Ching Massacre occurred on 18 February 1942 where a massive hunt for those perceived as being anti-Japanese (targeting the local Chinese males age below 50 who obstructing Japanese operations or threatening law and order).[129] They were inspected at screening centres, those who did not get through were hauled into lorries, and sent to various locations for execution. It was reported that between 40,000 and 50,000 local Chinese were killed, but the number of people who died in the operation remains unknown.[130] Singapore's founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was among those rounded up by the Japanese along with others, but he managed to escape. In an interview in 2011, he shared his experience of Japanese occupation of Singapore:

> The dark ages had descended on us. It was brutal, cruel. In looking back, I think it was the biggest single political education of my life because, for three and a half years, I saw the meaning of power and how power, politics, and government went together, and I understood how people trapped in a power situation responded because they had to live. One day the British were there, immovable, complete masters; the next day, the Japanese, whom we derided, mocked as short, stunted people with short-sighted squint eyes.[131]

[129] The Straits Times, 19 March 1947, pg.5 as quoted in http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/history/events/d0523464-3a43-4520-a864-f195a8aef418
[130] "What happened during the horrific Sook Ching Massacre in S'pore that left more than 40,000 people dead." *AsiaOne*, February 15, 2017. https://stomp.straitstimes.com/singapore/what-happened-during-the-horrific-sook-ching-massacre-in-spore-that-left-more-than-40000
[131] "Lee Kuan Yew – the best quotes from Singapore's founding father." *The Guardian*, Mar 23, 2015. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/23/lee-kuan-yew-the-best-quotes-from-singapores-founding-father

The incident prompted anger and ignited strong anti-Japanese from the local Chinese community.

iii. From Malayan Union to the Federation of Malaya (1946 – 1963)

Following the defeat of Japan and the return of the British to Malaya in 1946, the British possessions of Penang and Malacca (excluding Singapore), and the Federated Malay States together with the Unfederated Malay States were all combined to form the Malayan Union. This was to the detriment of the Malay Sultanates who lost not just their ceremonial supremacy but real administrative power as under the old Residential system. The Union also propagated a multiracial state and granted common citizenship to all the people of Malayan Union, with no special privileges accorded to the Malays.

As noted by A.C. Milner, the Union proposal provoked massive Malay protests and caused the most serious threat faced by the Sultanate system during the colonial period.[132] Perhaps the most glaring matter for the Malays was the Malayan Union policy on citizenship, which stated that British subjects would not lose their nationality upon being granted Malayan Union citizenship.[133] Simply put, the immigrants would be entitled to dual citizenship. The non-Malays, who would benefit most from the proposal, were supportive; the Chinese were generally skeptical and were fully occupied with their business affairs, while the Indians were more concerned and focused on the situation surrounding the independence of India.

A widespread and massive Malay protest followed, which paved the way for the formation of two organisations with conflicting objectives: the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) to spearhead the struggle against the Union, and the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU) to support the proposal on condition that Singapore was included as part of a future self-governing united Malaya. Due to intense opposition and pressure from retired officials in England compounded by the lack of support from other

[132] A.C. Millner, "Colonial Records History: British Malay", *Modem Asian Studies*, 2i, 4 (1987):774-775.
[133] Albert Lau, "The Malayan Union Controversies 1942-1948", *Singapore: Oxford University Press* (1991).

communities, the British decided to replace the proposed Malayan Union with the Federation of Malaya, formed on 1 February 1948, with a similar composition of states.

It is interesting to note the way UMNO focussed their opposition towards the Union. Where the British obtained the signatures of the sultans allegedly in a coercive manner, even 'employing threats of deposition', and had not bothered to seek the consent of the rulers subjects[134], UMNO did not go so far as to disown the institution of the sultanate. This is not surprising given the fact that their leadership was filled with aristocratic elites.

Although UMNO was initially established for the purpose of nullifying the Malayan Union, it later emerged as the key platform towards securing independence for Malaya. The organisation managed to position itself as the sole protector of the ethnic Malays, more from their success in attaining the political acknowledgement from both the sultans and the colonial British. UMNO's journey in navigating the political dynamic in Malaysia will be detailed more in the following section.

From that post-war beginning, other political parties were formed organised along communal lines: the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) representing the ethnic Chinese, and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) championing the Indian communities. At the first general election, held in 1957, the three parties – UMNO, MCA and MIC – amalgamated as one coalition and established the Alliance Party (in 1973 the party became the *Barisan Nasional*), overwhelmingly winning the election under the leadership of UMNO President Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Post-Independence Malaysia: Islamisation of a Nation (1981 – 2018)

iv. Mahathir Mohammad - Institutionalisation of Islam (1981 -2003)

Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, in his analysis on development and contestation regarding the interplay between Islam and politics in Malaysia from 1957 to 2017 concludes that it

[134] Omar Ariffin *Bangsa Melayu: Malay Concepts of Democracy and Community, 1945–1950*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press (1993): 46-48.

was during the Mahathir premiership that the political role of Islam started to shape and define the country's character and trajectory as a nation-state.[135] In the same vein, Martinez argues that during that period, Islam was 'redefined or reinvented' in accordance with Malaysia's racial, developmental and political circumstances.[136] Liow argues that during that era, the fusion of Islam became a prominent feature as a result of tension between UMNO and Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) in deriving legitimacy from religion[137]. Even at the beginning of his premiership in 1981, Mahathir announced a series of initiatives aimed 'to Islamise the country once and for all'.[138] In fact, he was seen by many as an ultra-Malay and perceived by the previous Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman as a threat to the multiracial communities. In 1981, the same year of his appointment as Prime Minister, Mahathir initiated a seminar to discuss the concept of development in Islam, and thereafter adopted the recommendations from the session for his administration. Unlike his predecessors, Mahathir introduced many new policies in favour of Islam, which changed the landscape of government administration in Malaysia. (See figure 2.2 below)

Year	**Prime Minister**	**Party**	**General Elections (Year)**	**Initiatives**
1981–2003	Mahathir Mohammad	United Malay National Organisation (UMNO)	GE6 (1982) – GE10 (1999)	Introduced policy and slogan: ▪ *Dasar Penerapan Nilai-Nilai* Islam (Policy on the adoption of Islamic Values) ▪ *Kepimpinan melalui teladan* (leadership by example) ▪ *Bersih, Cekap dan Amanah* (Clean, efficient and trustworthy Founded: ▪ International Islamic University ▪ International Institute of

[135] Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, "Shifting Trends of Islamism and Islamist Practices in Malaysia, 1957–2017", *Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (Dec 2018): 365.
[136] See Martinez, "Mahathir, Islam and the new Malay Dilemma", 216.
[137] See Liow, "Political Islam in Malaysia: Problematising Discourse and Practice in the UMNO – PAS 'Islamisation Race", 2007,185.
[138] See A Fauzi A Hamid and CM Razali, "The Changing Face of Political Islam in Malaysia in the Era of Najib Razak, 2009-13", *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia:* 308.

				Islamic Thought and Civilisation ▪ Institute of Islamic Understanding of Malaysia Placed *JAKIM* directly under Prime Minister's Department
2003 – 2009	Abdullah Ahmad Badawi	United Malay National Organisation (UMNO)	GE11 (2004) –GE12 (2008)	Introduced slogan: ▪ *Islam Hadhari* (Civilizational Islam) Established: ▪ Halal Industry Development Corporation Widened Halal scope from certification to industry development
2009 – 2018	Najib Razak	United Malay National Organisation (UMNO)	GE13 (2013) –GE14 (2018)	Introduced slogans: ▪ *Wasatiyyah* (balanced, humility and excellence) ▪ 1Malaysia

Figure 2.2: Islam-Malay related government initiatives 1981–2018

On the international front, major events like the Iranian Revolution and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, both in 1979, helped to create awareness of Islamism. Nagata posits that this inspired the emergence of movements including *Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia* (ABIM, meaning Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement), *Darul Arqam* and *Jamaat Tabligh.*[139] Meanwhile, PAS began leveraging the revival of Islamism and pushing for a more deliberate agenda to outdo UMNO. The outcome was encouraging with the growing support base in Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis, and Kelantan.[140] Perhaps more alarming to UMNO was evidence that PAS was attracting a significant number of Malay Muslim graduates from both locally and from overseas. The party was consistent in

[139] J. Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radical and the Roots* (University of British Colombia (1984), 83-87. ABIM or the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement was formed in 1971 and propagated that the official status of Islam as Malaysia's official religion is inadequate that the constitution should clearly built of Islamic law. *Darul Arqam* was set up in 1968 by Ashaari Muhammad and succeeded in attracting many of the young and educated Malays. *Jamaat Tabligh* is a missionary movement that originated in India and began growing in Malaysia in the 1950s.

[140] In 1999 election, PAS emerged as the strongest opposition party with victory in four states.

maintaining their principles and objectives and willing to forego potential alliances with other parties.[141]

Prime Minister Mahathir acted swiftly to maintain Malay support and prevent the grass-roots support from UMNO shifting to these movements by introducing effective programs of political engineering through institutionalising of Islam intended at '… enforcing homogeneity, harping on the theme of Malay Muslims unity in the face of national and global challenges'.[142] UMNO under Mahathir's leadership launched a series of initiatives to 'out-Islam' PAS. Among the promising initiatives, seen by many political pundits was the recruitment of Anwar Ibrahim into UMNO in 1982.[143] Anwar, a leader of ABIM, was groomed by Mahathir and provided with an accelerated pathway into the UMNO leadership ladder until he assumed the Deputy Presidency of UMNO, Deputy Prime Minister, and was even poised to succeed Mahathir as the next Prime Minister. Anwar reciprocated Mahathir's patronage, Chandra Muzaffar suggests, 'by giving unstinted support to him whenever he was confronted by a political crisis.'[144] Together, Mahathir and Anwar steadily gained influence and confidence in UMNO and had literally put PAS at bay.

Several streams of the 'Islamisation of a nation' process were given impetus through measures including: establishment of the Islamic Bank in 1983; *takaful* insurance and pawnshops between 1981 and 1983; declaration of an official policy of instilling Islam values into government machinery known as *Dasar Penerapan Nilai-Nilai* Islam (Policy on the adoption of Islamic Values); use of slogans of *Kepimpinan melalui teladan* (leadership by example) and *Bersih, Cekap dan Amanah* (Clean, efficient and

[141] PAS and *Semangat 46* (UMNO splinter) broke ties in 1996 over disagreement on the power of Sultan. Their collaboration with Democratic Actions Party (DAP) was broken in 2001 over their stand on Islamic State.

[142] Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid and Che Hamdan Che Mohd. Razali, "The Changing Face of Political Islam in Malaysia in the Era of Najib Razak, 2009-2013", *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* Vol. 30, No. 2 (2015): 301-37.

[143] Anwar founded ABIM to unite all the Muslim youths under a single organisation at the height of political rivalry between UMNO and PAS over the champion of Islam in Malaysia. ABIM trained his members with holistic Islamic values – a sense of high self-esteem, be responsible, reliable and independent to self and community. The grand ulama Yusuf Qardhawi gave his full endorsement to effort made by Anwar.

[144] Chandra Muzaffar, "Power Struggle in Malaysia: The Anwar Crisis," *ISIM Newletter,* 2/99,13.

trustworthy) in 1984; the founding of International Islamic University in 1983, the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation in 1987 and the Institute of Islamic Understanding of Malaysia in 1992.[145] Mahathir Mohammad created the 'Islamic Consultative Body' in 1981 to allow the platform to discuss and deliberate matters pertaining to Islam. He ordered the newsreaders for a national television station to begin the news with the Islamic greeting *'assamualaikum'* (in Arabic, May peace be upon you).

Islamism during Mahathir Mohamad's leadership featured a state-engineered approach intended to create homogeneity whilst harping on modernity to both excite Malays and pacify other Malaysians into continuous union against the growing internal and global challenges. A modernisation and industrialisation agenda remained his top priority to stimulate economic growth of the Malays and the rest of the citizenry. It is worth noting that even when non-Muslim communities were suspicious of government attempts to impose Islamic values in them, their dissatisfaction was subtle, arguably due to the country's economic growth and development during Mahathir's administration. He elevated the Islamic centre, Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) and placed it under the direct purview of the Prime Minister's Department. The ramification is control of intolerance of what A. Hamid and C. M. Razali refer to as 'non-conformist' Muslims, including the *Darul Arqam* movement (1968–94)[146]. Further, Mahathir's proclamation of Malaysia as an Islamic state in 2001, despite being viewed by some as an attempt to put closure over the status of Islam in Malaysia, had caused uproar not just from many Western governments and non-Malay communities but from their longstanding PAS who quickly condemned it as reported in *Harakahdaily* (2 October 2011) as '… an empty attempt at rhetorical brinkmanship'.[147]

[145] See Gerhard Hoffstaedter in his book *Modern Muslim Identities: Negotiating Religion and Ethnicity in Malaysia* (NIAS Press, 2011), 96 describes all the progressive Islamic projects is mainly the work of Mahathir Mohammad. The aim was to promote a form of Islam that would disarm the fundamentalist wing in Malaysia, namely PAS.
[146] Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid and Che Hamdan Che Mohd. Razali, "The Changing Face of Political Islam in Malaysia in the Era of Najib Razak, 2009-2013", *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* Vol. 30, No. 2 (2015): 309.
[147] This is due to two factors (1) Federal constitution of Malaysia (2) Islamic Law in Malaysia.

v. Abdullah Ahmad Badawi - Civilisational Islam (2003-2009)

In his parliamentary maiden speech, after assuming the premiership in 2003, the Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, as quoted in *The Star Online* dated 9 Nov 2003, is to have said, 'work with me and not for me', indicating his participatory leadership and consensus approach. He was seen as among the select few of UMNO leaders able to mount a challenge to PAS. Ali and Liow argue that Abdullah had firmly counted on the challenge of PAS leaders to engage in a debate over Islamism: 1) he dismissed the PAS blueprint for the establishment of an Islamic state; 2) he demonstrated that Islamic features of governance were already being observed by the government; 3) he had displayed his Islamic credentials by leading prayers for a range of events[148].

Abdullah had brought into life *Islam Hadhari* (Civilisational Islam) as a 'fundamental theme of his administration'[149] and 'a compliment to Malaysia, for acknowledgment as an Islamic State'.[150] The concept of Islam Hadhari is twofold; first, 'the concept helped to situate the role of Islam in the context of the development of the Malaysia economy'[151], second, to overcome racial polarisation, partly due to the previous Islamism initiatives which carried the mandate to provide multi-religion Malaysia.[152] It is worth noting that it was during Abdullah's leadership that Malaysia started its Halal industrialisation program, enabling the participation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) into a global business leading to significant economic contributions to the country.

Unfortunately, *Islam Hadhari* under Abdullah failed to achieve its desired outcome due to collusion between the inclusivity arising from Islamic messages propagated by Abdullah with the growing UMNO ultra-conservatives and religious bureaucrats. It is during Abdullah's premiership that UMNO and their *Barisan Nasional* (BN) coalition

[148] Ali, Mushahid and Chin Yong, Joseph Liaw 2004, "Malaysia: PM Abdullah Badawi's Performance and Prospects", *Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies:200.*
[149] Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid and Che Hamdan Che Mohd. Razali, "The Changing Face of Political Islam in Malaysia in the Era of Najib Razak, 2009-2013", *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* Vol. 30, No. 2 (2015): 310.
[150] Bashir (2005).
[151] Lukman Thaib, 'Muslim Politics in Malaysia and the Democratisation Process', International Journal of Islamic Thought, Vol 3.2(2013) 49.
[152] Sven Alexander Schottman, 2008, *Muslim Democrats: The Changing Face of Political Islam in Malaysia. Islam and the Question to Reform.* Melbourne University Press, (2008), 64.

had a landslide victory in the 2004 general election, but later turned upside down with their poor performance in the 2008 general election.[153]

vi. Najib Razak - 1 Malaysia and *'Wasatiyyah'* (2009-2018)

The Malaysian Insight (27 March 2018) stated that Najib envisioned Malaysia to be a moderate Muslim country from its '*wasatiyyah*' concept. The concept is not just about moderation but also balance, humility and excellence. (Najib had even established a *Wasatiyyah* Institute of Malaysia and chaired a national level *Wasatiyyah* Implementation committee meeting on 17 Nov 2017.) In *The Star* (7 January 2018), Najib was quoted saying that moderation is not an easy path. He added that more had to be done to explain why the Islamic State propaganda is the very opposite of Islam. He made this statement possibly to ridicule Mahathir Mohammad, who had declared Malaysia as an Islamic State in 2001, and was heading the opposition party during the 2013 general election.

However, A. Hamid and C. M, Razali view Najib's concept as 'ambiguity and rhetoric'.[154] I view this is as a reflection of Najib's balancing act between promoting his multi-ethnic national unity, known as a 1Malaysia concept, and pacifying the conservative groups within UMNO in what A.B. Shamsul refers to as 'stable tension'.[155] The 1Malaysia concept was introduced by Najib to promote national unity. The eight values of the concept are high-performance culture, accuracy, knowledge, innovation, integrity, strong will, loyalty and wisdom.

According to Washida, the 1Malaysia strategy helped UMNO recover nine peninsular seats in the 2013 general election[156], albeit, as reported by *The Diplomat* (2013), 'with reduced votes and fewer parliamentary seats'. *BBC News Online* (6 May 2013) reported that immediately after the announcement of the election results Najib acknowledged the

[153] Referred by several literatures as a political tsunami 2008.
[154] Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid and Che Hamdan Che Mohd. Razali, "The Changing Face of Political Islam in Malaysia in the Era of Najib Razak, 2009-2013", *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* Vol. 30, No. 2 (2015): 314.
[155] A.B. Shamsul, "Texts and Collective Memories: The construction of 'Chinese' and 'Chineseness' from the Perspective of a Malay" in *Ethnic Relations and Nation-Building in Southeast Asia*, ed. Leo Suryadinata. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2004), 121.
[156] Washida Hidekuni 2018, 'The origins and (failed) adaptation of a dominant party: The UMNO in Malaysia', *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* (2018): 3.

need to undertake national reconciliation as ethnic Chinese voters had turned to the opposition in what he termed 'a Chinese tsunami'. *Utusan Malaysia* (2013) reported that UMNO leaders blamed the lack of Chinese support and accused them of betraying *Barisan Nasional*. Notwithstanding the continuous campaign by the Malaysian Chinese Association (a Chinese-based BN party) that the vote to Democratic Action Party (a Chinese majority opposition party) was, in fact, a vote to Islamic party.[157] [Note that PAS has adopted *Tahaluf Siyasi*, an Islamic political unity method to cooperate with parties to create a *Pakatan Rakyat* coalition].[158]

After the 2013 General Election, Najib's government adopted a palpably less tolerant approach in religious matters leading to serious religious fissures in Malaysia.[159] James Chin posits that UMNO had benefited from its agenda for Islamist conservatism that augured well for Malay Muslims who resided in the more favorably represented semi-urban and rural areas. They focused on winning more Malay votes through the introduction of policies and measures favoring Malays and Islam.[160] This was further aggravated by the emergence of various groups and individuals that A. Hamid and C. M. Razali refer to as 'conservative', 'pro-establishment', 'moderate', 'liberal' and even 'secular' claiming the authority to speak on behalf of Islam.[161] Mainstream media controlled by UMNO also jumped the bandwagon into the path of 'ethnocentrism and intolerance'.[162]

[157] Pakatan Rakyat was an informal political coalition formed by Parti Keadilan Rakyat, Democratic Action Party and PAS.
[158] *Tahaluf Siyasi* refers to the efforts of certain parties to unite or build some sort of cooperation with other parties.
[159] Lee Kam Hing, Lee and Thock Ker Pong, Thock 2014, 'Thirteenth General Elections (GE13): Chinese votes and implications on Malaysian politics', *Kajian Malaysia*, Vol. 32, Supp. 2, 44.
[160] James Chin, 'UMNO Relies Increasingly on Rural Malay Support'. *The Straits Times*, May 14, 2013
[161] Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid and Che Hamdan Che Mohd. Razali, "The Changing Face of Political Islam in Malaysia in the Era of Najib Razak, 2009-2013", *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* Vol. 30, No. 2 (2015): 325.
[162] *Ibid*, 323.

Post-independence Singapore: Managing Malay and State Relations (1965 - 2018)

vii. Lee Kuan Yew, Goh Chok Tong and Lee Hsien Long

The early history of Singapore appears to be the same as, and subsumed as, part of Malayan history. The general view among Singaporean leaders, as stated by Adeline Wai Fun Sum, regarded colonialism as 'the modernising force which had transformed the non-western world'.[163] It was during colonial rule, that 'originally primitive and backward economies were developed through technological, professional, administrative expertise provided by Europeans'.[164] Singapore's founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew proudly states:

> We deem ourselves to be amongst the fortunate few who can afford to be proud of their past, with no desire to rewrite or touch up the truth. It is a short history, 150 years, but long enough for us to value our association with the British people.[165]

In the early stage of the Federation of Malaya 1963, the Singaporean Malays had the opportunity to foster a closer relationship with the Malayan Malays. Moreover, this provided the Singaporean Malays, on the one hand with a sense of being a majority in their country, and on the other, assurance of privileges as accorded to the Malays due to their political dominance. However, when Singapore was expelled from the Federation and achieved full independence on 9 August 1965, the Chinese became the majority with a government led by the People's Action Party[166] (PAP) and remains so today.

For the Singaporean Malays, the outcome was that the previous policies of the Federation of Malaya, such as Malays' affirmative action, were accorded less recognition and replaced with meritocracy. National policies and the PAP's government attitude towards the Malays and Islam tend to occupy less attention and recognition across all three Prime

[163] Sum, Wai Fun Adeline, 'History-writing in Singapore', unpublished Honours thesis, Singapore: Department of History, National University of Singapore. (1991)
[164] PM Lee Kuan Yew addressing the University of Singapore Democratic Socialist, 'An Exercise in Political and Economic Modernization', 23 September, Singapore.
[165] *Ibid.*
[166] PAP was established in 1954 and captured state power in 1959.

Ministerships since independence. The meritocracy, as argued by scholars, holds that the system has created a nationwide competitive culture that works well in addressing their limited natural resources and determination to survive and succeed. Several policies intended to foster inter-communal stability, included an 'integrated education system, a tighter Internal Security Act and the resettlement of residents in ethnic ghettos to the new Housing Development Board Estates'.[167] The execution of such policies was perceived by the Malays as a bias towards the ethnic Chinese majority. Relevant policies designed specifically to serve the demands of the Chinese in language and culture were given priority, for example, the Speak Mandarin Campaign of 1979 and the Special Assistance Plan (SAP) school scheme of 1980 (aimed at supporting the nine best Chinese secondary schools in their promotion of Mandarin Chinese). The Malay protests that the programs disadvantaged their children were ignored.

Stereotyping of Islam and Malays in Singapore, beginning with 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, the Islamisation of neighbouring Malaysia in the 1980s and the 'Herzog Incident' in 1986, stimulated further the prevailing tension and concern between Malays and the Singapore state. The constant image of religious extremism and global terrorism has had adverse repercussions on the identity of the Malays contributing to a popular perception that Malays have a tendency towards aggression. The rising trend of Islamic conservatism among the Malays has been deduced as the reason for their unwillingness to integrate with the rest of Singaporeans. The late Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew refers to this as the 'wave':

> I think Muslims socially do not cause any trouble, but they are distinct and separate. The generation that worked with me – Othman Wok, Rahim Ishak – that was before the wave came sweeping back, sweeping them; that generation integrated well. We drank beer, we went canvassing, we went electioneering, we ate together.[168]

[167] Hussein Mutalib, "The Singapore Minority Dilemma' Asian Survey, Vol.51, No. 6 (November/December 2011), 1168.
[168] Lee K.Y., Han F. K., (2011) *Lee Kuan Yew: Hard Truths to Keep Singapore Going.* Singapore: Straits Times Press

The statement was made following public outcry about the Guinness Stout advertisement (see Figure 2-3) that was featured in the 1968 *Kesatuan Guru –guru Melayu Barat* (West Malaysia Teachers' Union) program book. This seems to reflect on state prejudice in placing the burden and pressure to integrate on the minorities but not with the majority Chinese.

The caption in the Malay language reads:

"Guinness Stout: good for us", and the passage proclaims, "A glass of Guinness Stout whets the appetite. A glass of Guinness Stout restores energy. For every glass of Guinness Stout is healthy. It provides strength when your body feels tired and lethargic. This is the drink that gives extra health to every meal. Yes, after work, whenever you're exhausted or sometimes lack appetite, nothing is better than a glass of Guinness Stout."

Figure 2-3: Advertisement that sparked Malay's outburst in Singapore.

The popular stereotypes carried over from colonial days, as stated by Lily Zubaidah Rahim, are that Malays are 'endowed with traits of complacency, indolence, apathy,

infused with a love of leisure and an absence of motivation and discipline'[169]. Gabriele Marranci suggests that such popular stereotypes of Malays support the simplistic idea that Malays are predisposed towards drug addiction, criminality, teenage pregnancy, and family dysfunction, and are consequently unable to perform as well as other racial groups, particularly when compared to the majority Chinese.[170] These stereotypes and negative perceptions have understandably made the Malays defensive.

Chua Beng-Huat, in his book *Communitarian ideology and democracy in Singapore*, suggests that PAP, during the initial phase of independence propagated the 'survival of nation' concept, reassuring the people that issues can be resolved by being a successful capitalist industrial nation.[171] Chua Beng-Huat elaborates that this 'ideology of survival' has served as the basic concept for the rationalisation of state policies that extend beyond economics to other spheres of life. This can be seen as a form of blanket endorsement for the PAP government to continue invoking social policies that, in some instances, may even encroach the social life of its people – all for the sake of maintaining political hegemony. A classic example is public furore over the issue of Muslim women not being allowed to wear *tudung* (headscarves) in uniformed services. (This is not a new issue or exclusive to Singapore, but has been hotly debated between Muslims and non-Muslims across the world in countries such as in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Australia.) Nevertheless, in Singapore, the PAP government suppressed the issue, which stopped it from being debated openly[172] as they argued that it might stir racial issues and create public disharmony.

[169] Lily Zubaidah Rahim (1998:49).
[170] Gabriele Marranci 'Defensive or offensive dining? Halal dining practices among Malay Muslim Singaporeans and their effects on integration' *The Australian Journal of Anthropology (2012): 86.*
[171] Chua Beng-Huat 'Communitarian ideology and democracy in Singapore' *Routledge London and NY* (1995: 4).
[172] For example, to put closure to no-tudung matter, the government adopted a 'behind the scene' approach where Prime Minister Lee held closed-door dialogue with some 100 leaders and representatives from the Malay communities to give assurance that the government's position was not static. They argued that the session helped to promote consensus and understanding among the Malays community.

Current Prime Minister Lee Hsien Long, when asked by reporters to comment on the exchange in Parliament on this issue between a Workers Party Member and the Environment and Water Resources Minister, stated:

> Championing divisive issues publicly, to pressure the Government and win communal votes, will only stir up emotions and damage Singapore's multi-racial harmony.[173]

Lily Zubaidah Rahim notes that fear of a public campaign against the no-*tudung* policy 'appears to have been augmented by the fear of political Islam[174], fear of difference, fear of weakening the Sino-centred national identity and perhaps most significantly, the PAP fear of loosening its grip of power'.[175] She further elaborated that such a policy was based on the principle of 'promoting ethnic integration and social cohesion'[176], especially in schools, although no empirical evidence suggests that wearing *tudung* in schools impedes harmony. Moreover, she argues that the State has violated Article 15 (1) of the Constitution, which provides every person with 'the right to profess and practice his religion and to propagate it'.[177] An Naim (as cited in Lily Zubaidah Rahim) argues that this form of authoritarian state secularism is 'designed to enable the state to control religion rather than simply remove it from the public sphere'.[178]

Goh Chok Tong, after taking over the premiership from Lee Kuan Yew in 1990, offered a more open political system featuring an extensive program of community visits as well as encouraging more avenues for public discourse. This enabled him to garner more support from Malay and Indian communities. However, scholars argue that this seems to reflect only his particular leadership style, while the policy of PAP remains the same. At a

[173] www, https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/championing-divisive-issues-publicly-could-damage-singapore-s-ha-8707338; Championing divisive issues publicly could damage Singapore's harmony: PM Lee.
[174] Singaporean Muslims have been placed in government's radar especially at the height of political Islam in neighbouring countries; Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. This has extended to outside the electoral space including the implementation of *Syariah* law in Acheh and Brunei's self-declaring Islamic State. In addition, the spread of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) movement in Southeast Asia has been a growing concern.
[175] Lily Zubaidah, "Governing Muslims in Singapore's secular authoritarian state", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 2012 pg. 178.
[176] *Ibid.*
[177] *Ibid.*
[178] *Ibid.*

dialogue session with community leaders organised following the arrest of a Jemaah Islamiyah (JI)[179] operative on 28 January 2002, Prime Minister Goh emphasised the importance to inter-racial and inter-religious relations of collectively speaking with one voice in their fight against terrorism. This is followed the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US, the war in Afghanistan, and the arrest of the suspected JI operative. Among Prime Minister Goh's immediate actions to promote interaction across all communities was the setting up of Inter-Racial Confidence Circles (IRCC) on 3 March 2002 in every constituency. The entity comprised leaders from various religious, racial, social, educational and business organisations in each constituency. According to the IRCC website, the strategic intent of IRCC was to be 'networks of trust that unite people regardless of race and religion'.[180]

Hence the introduction of the 1965 Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) and in 1990 the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill (that empowers the state to separate religion from politics), which to my view, demonstrate the government's consistent effort to preserve secularism and curtail the influence of religion in the daily life of their citizens – purportedly for the sake of 'survival of nation'.

It is a common view among scholars, one that I share, that there are connections among Malays across Southeast Asia due to their shared religious values, languages and, to a certain extent, food. The Singaporean Malays, like their Malaysian counterparts, view themselves as the indigenous people of the Malay Archipelago and never as immigrants, despite being assigned as such by PAP leaders. They therefore see it as incumbent upon themselves to exercise their rights and entitlements above the immigrants. Over the years, however, the Malay's state of affairs has been improving due to increased awareness of the importance of education as well as a growing tendency to discuss their dilemma publicly, as demonstrated in their numerous participations in seminars and conventions. Their participation in various activities and practices enacts, in a practical way, their claims to belonging.

[179] JI is a militant group aligned to Al-Qaeda (an organisation that was responsible for US attack on 11 September 2011).
[180] https://www.ircc.sg/.

viii. The emergence and influence of Islamic missionary movement

Muhamadiyah is among the major Islamic movements with growing influence across countries in Southeast Asia. Founded in Yogyakarta Indonesia in 1912, the movement has contributed to the socio-economic wellbeing of many Indonesians through active involvement in social, political, economic and educational spectrums. A *Muhamadiyah*-related movement in Singapore succeeded in maintaining a presence for many years despite operating within a Muslim-minority setting (which logically should translate into a lack of local support) under a secular government. As suggested by Syed Muhd Khairuddin Ajuneid '... movements that propagated a more critical stance towards state secularism and the relegation of Islam to the private sphere have been subjected to strict government controls, which in many instances have led to the disruption of their activities'[181]. Many more Islamic movements were established in Singapore but were short-lived for various reasons.

Singapore's version of *Muhamadiyah*, known as *Persatuan Muhamadiyah* Singapore (PMS) was formed on 25 May 1957 following the various incidents of violent opposition at that time due to conflicts arising from different Islamic movements.[182] This triggered Ali Hainin (a local school teacher) to initiate the consolidation and unification of all the movements into one. PMS, despite having a similar name and shared ideas, is an independent institution with no direct alliances with the Indonesian *Muhamadiyah*. According to the founder, the term *Muhamadiyah* was more to reflect the upholding of Prophet Muhammad's teaching, with primary objectives of 'religious purification and modernisation, particularly in the provision of social services'.[183] They made social welfare activities and education their priorities over religious polemics (they are more

[181] Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljuneid. "'A theory of colonialism in the Malay world", *Postcolonial Studies*, (2011):282.

[182] There were three movements headed by three religious teachers originated from Sumatera and Riau Islands; Rijal Abdul, Abdul Rahman Haron and Amir Esa. They started to use mosques and houses to spread their belief and preaching efforts with the Muslim community in Singapore. Their growing popularity in attracting many students was accompanied by resistance among the public. Hence various allegations were spreaded that include the three were propagating the teaching of *Kaum Muda* (a reformist movement) and their teaching will lead to elimination of certain old practices such as the celebration of Prophet Muhammad Birthday. They were also allegedly associated to another heterodox *Ahmadiyyah* movement hence we labelled *sesat (*deviant).

[183] See Muhammadiyah in Singapore 2 January 2018 https://crcs.ugm.ac.id/news/11935/muhammadiyah -in-singapore.html.

open to accommodating traditionalist Muslims and Syiah communities). Their systematic educational framework starts from the lowest kindergarten and progresses to programs that offer degrees and certificates in Islamic Studies. There is a *madrasah* or educational institution that focuses on science and technology education for children, and daily and weekly Islamic classes are offered to migrant workers. Other social welfare safety nets include medical services for the elders provided at Health and Day Centres as well as a Welfare Home where food and residential facilities are offered to children with incarcerated parents.

As argued by Syed Muhd Khairuddin Ajuneid, the *Muhamadiyah* movement has been successful in navigating the challenges brought about by social demography and state secularism through broadening its activities and ideology as well as being adaptive to the political and social dynamic of Singapore.[184] This is a reflection of an effective and creative approach undertaken by Muslim institutions in Singapore for maintaining sustainability and relevance. I am of the view that this PMS development model is very influential in shaping and building the characteristics of Malay Muslims in Singapore.

Conclusion

The above history illustrates how, after the signing of the Pangkor Treaty in 1874, the British destroyed the structures and privileges of the old Malay Sultanates and then, applying their wealth-motivated colonial policies, gradually made over the various Malay states with minimal disruption. This colonial project was unbelievably tolerated by the Malays (some scholars attribute this to Malays' fastidiousness about hospitality), allowing the British to exert their authority, enjoy legitimate 'possession' over the Malaya state and exploit the wealth of a nation. The British administrative Resident system had systematically reduced the power of Sultans to what Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian refers to as 'a mere politico-administrative glamorous bystander'.[185] The Sultans, despite enjoying the face of power but never having the authority, lost all their political

[184] Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "A theory of colonialism in the Malay world," *Postcolonial Studies*, 14: 1, (2011):4.
[185] Refer to Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian British Colonial rule, Japanese occupation and the transformation of Malay Kinship 1930s-1957, New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies 11, 1 (June 2019): 106-31.

and governing authority to the British Resident, who always had the final say on matters pertaining to the interests of the British. Applying the Resident system diligently ensured the locals would continue to perceive their Sultans as figures of power and authority.

Notwithstanding their policies and subsequently implemented plan, the British brought modernisation and catalysed changes to the social, economic and political fabrics of Malaya. From being solely an unknown Malay territory, the Malaya and Singapore states transformed into Malaysia, a prosperous cosmopolitan nation with the highest per capita Gross Domestic Product recorded by any country (or territory) in Asia during the late eighteenth century. Their current political system also began with the coming of the British. The direct consequence of this development was a social structure where a massive influx of immigrants from South China (known as Nanyang) and South India created the current multi-ethnic nations. A repercussion of this was that differences in colour of social stratification (a result of the divide and rule policy by the British) lead to greater racial polarisation: various ethnic groups lived in their own neighborhood – Malays in villages, Chinese in towns and Indians on plantations; each group worked their own occupation, practiced their own religion and formed their own political parties.

Similarly, the occupation by the Japanese disrupted social and economic progress and exacerbated communal conflicts between the Malays and Chinese. Their non-interference policy appeared a lip service, as they assertively manipulated Islam and the institutions – mosques, *surau*, Imams – as part of their propaganda drives aimed at winning a war. They had no interest in Islam or the Malays. Hence, the Malay Islamic practices during the occupation were a result of negotiations with the Japanese over religion and culture. From here, the Malays began to see themselves as a united Malay nation – the awakening of nationalism.

A British-style education system was introduced alongside the prevailing traditional system. So schools, other that the government English system, were allowed to focus on a distinct ethnic culture where each group was allowed to continue learning their own language and content. Therefore, the Malays went to vernacular schools to maintain their

culture and preserve their identity. These schools generally had inferior resources and low-quality teachers. Due to this, Malays commonly lacked English proficiency and ended up working in various lower levels of civil services such as postal workers, police officers, clerks and teachers in Malay medium schools. Most of the Malays were unable to secure government administrative jobs due to lack of a university or technical qualification.

The current shape and form of the political and demographic dimensions of both Malaysia and Singapore are a ramification of both their colonial past experiences and their subsequent journeys as modern states. Despite sharing a similar historical journey, culture and economic interdependence, Malaysia and Singapore are fundamentally different in a number of aspects, including their political makeup. The public realm of Islam in Malaysia is much bigger than in Singapore. Islam is Malaysia's official religion and must be ceremoniously projected to give the impression of its dominance in all major public events in the country. Nagata suggests this is part of solidifying the status and identity of the people for whom the country is named.[186] As a result, Halal is defined and navigated in quite dissimilar paths in the two countries.

As a Muslim-majority state, the Malay-based political party UMNO has been influential in shaping the direction of the country. The invoking of Islamic principles in Malaysia has been and will remain a very effective way of securing political mileage as Islamic rituals, beliefs and practices are encapsulated in all layers of society and culture. This holds true given the fact that religion, language, and royalty as posited by A.B. Shamsul '... formed three key pillars of Malayness' and are stated in the Federal Constitution as a basis of *ketuanan Melayu* (Malay dominance).[187] Invoking the principles is also a trade-off made by the British for granting citizenship to migrant Chinese and Indians. Ironically, the Islamic agenda by UMNO and PAS through policies, approach and discourse were not without their political and social costs. The agenda provides an

[186] See Nagata, "Ethnonationalism versus religious transnationalism: Nation-building and Islam in Malaysia", *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXXXVII, No.2 (1997), 133.
[187] A.B. Shamsul. "The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism – The socio-historical roots of the NEP and its contemporary implications" *The Developing Economies* XXXV-3 Sept 1997, 244.

outright exclusivity and radical intra-Malay Muslims as well as nourished racial polarisation of a pluralist Malaysians. Their Islamisation initiatives from Islamic banking to religious bureaucracy, including Halal certification, managed to put their political rival PAS at bay and strengthened UMNO as a defender of Islam. On the surface, it may appear to be about religion, but the popular opinion, especially among the moderate and educated Malays, is that it is rhetoric and serves as a conduit to remain in power.

As for Singapore, the Chinese dominated PAP has been governing with authoritarian rule guided by meritocracy to ensure growth and sustainability post-independence. This has enabled them to achieve rapid economic development with the populace enjoying status and prestige, as propagated by the late Lee Kuan Yew. The ramifications of success and failure created a high degree of competitiveness. The challenge therefore relates to the ability of their plural society to continuously co-exist in a harmonious manner. Their social-political administrative structure that identifies populace based on race (Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others (known as CMIO)) inherited from the colonial British remain until today. Such a structure perpetuates a racial stereotype, and in the case of Malays, often linked to negativity, rigidity, a lack of integration and, as suggested by the late Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, as 'too strict'. This has made the Malays become defensive.

Political masters in both states have always reminded their populaces of the previous race riots in 1969 and 1967 and of the importance of preserving racial harmony, especially between the ethnic Malays and Chinese. Without hesitation, governments in both states (the previously UMNO-led government in Malaysia and the current PAP government in Singapore) continuously employ these threats to counter any discourse on certain issues deemed to be inciting public furor over the privilege of Malays and Islam, particularly in Malaysia.

Notwithstanding the growing religiosity among Malays (due to their strong linkages with wider Malays across Southeast Asia), they seem to remain moderate in regard to their political and social lives; hence they pose virtually no political threat to PAP. This

characteristic owes much to the PMS 'moderation' development approach that shaped the social norms and culture of Malay Muslims to be more creative in their socialising process, which enables them to partake fully in their multicultural social life.

CHAPTER 3: INSTITUTIONALISING AND REGULATING HALAL CERTIFICATION – MOTIVATION AND EXPRESSION

This chapter discusses the connotation of Halal food in Muslim societies and the globally recognised Halal certification system developed by Singapore and Malaysia. The discussion includes the ways in which the governments of both states bureaucratised the 'religious market' by developing an institutional framework, governance structure, policies and practices. The institutionalisation of religious and cultural knowledge, as well as practices, are pervasive and diffuse across government and semi-government agencies. These agencies categorised here as either core or supporting institutions, act in concert and play their roles either as custodians or delivery agents based on their perceived purpose. They are jealously guarded through policy and legislation and supported by financial allocation to effectively and efficiently undertake their roles and functions. 'Halal standard' development aims to clarify ambiguity surrounding the Halal market, thereby resulting in a standard form.

I argue that the institutionalisation of religious knowledge and practices serve to fulfil political and socio-economic objectives on the one hand, and on the other, help to overcome political and social challenges. Halal is dispersed among the various core and supporting agencies entrusted as custodians and delivery agents. These agencies are not just well equipped with various policies and legislations to govern their existence, but also well supported by a continuous financial allocation by the state to undertake their roles and responsibilities. To clarify the ambiguity surrounding the Halal concept, Halal standards were introduced in 2000 as a living document comprising a set of rules, guidelines, specifications and procedures on matters pertaining to Halal practices. This document has been established through a consensus process and as a collective responsibility by relevant stakeholders and benchmarked against other standards for market recognition and global acceptance. Therein lies the critical infrastructure covering economic and ecological dimensions of Halal food certification analysed here. This

analysis examines the relationship between religion and markets and illustrates the compatibility between Islam and modernity.

What constitutes Halal?

The underlying principles of Halal are taken from Muslim's Holy Book Al-Quran verses 168, 172 and 173 of *Al-Baqarah*, prescribing Halal as permissible and *Thoyyibban* as wholesomeness.

> O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.
> (Surah Al-Baqarah: Verse 168).

> O you, who have believed, eat from the good things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship.
> (Surah Al-Baqarah: Verse 172).

> He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.
> (Surah Al-Baqarah: Verse 173).

Based on these verses, Halal can be defined as food that complies with Islamic requirements, as per conditions and prohibitions stated in the holy book Al-Quran and supported by Hadith (the life, action and teaching of Prophet Muhammad). Johan Fischer posits that the proliferation of Halal can be seen as distinct sets of invocations of haram or taboo.[188] This includes an injunction to avoid any substances that may be contaminated with porcine residues or alcohol, such as gelatine, glycerine, emulsifiers, enzymes, flavours and flavouring. He continues, citing Rouse and Hoskins, that Halal is 'a communicative process of social action, in which pragmatic and social dimensions are

[188] Johan Fischer '*The Halal frontier: Muslim Consumers in a Globalized Mark*et'. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

fused to comment on particular historical moments'.[189] Fischer argues that Halal signifies practices that can be associated with race, authenticity, group membership and citizenship. Notwithstanding the ultimate objective of consumption is compliance with Islamic requirements, the Muslim consumers, as hypothesised by Badruldin et. al 'want the food they consume to not only be free from harmful ingredients and pathogens but also to be hygienic, pure and wholesome'.[190] In essence, the preparation and exchange of Halal food through the food chain is a form of culinary infrastructure.

To put this into the perspective of the modern food industry, a number of requirements and standards have been made by relevant authorities. For example, the Malaysian government articulation of Halal is stipulated in the Malaysian Trade Description Order 1975 as:

> When the term is used in relation to food in any form whatsoever, in the process of trade or commerce as an aspect of trading or part of an aspect of trading for the preferred food, the terms 'Halal', 'Guaranteed Halal' or 'Muslim Food' or any other terms that may be used to indicate or may be understood as meaning to indicate as permissible to be consumed by Muslims and allowed in their religion for the preferred food to be consumed, must therefore mean the following, that is, the food for which such terms are being used:
>
> i. It does not stem from or consists of any part of or item from animals that are forbidden to Muslims by Islamic law, or animals that have not been slaughtered according to Islamic law.
> ii. It does not contain any substance that is considered impure in Islamic law.
> iii. Is not prepared, processed or manufactured using equipment or utensils that are not free from impurities as defined by Islamic law.
> iv. That, in the preparation, processing or storage stage, does not come in contact with or is stored near any kind of food that does not meet the requirements of para(s) (a), (b) or (c) or any substances that are considered impure by Islamic law.

[189] Rouse and Hoskins (2004, 227) as cited in Johan Fisher (2011).
[190] Badruldin, B., Mohamed, Z., Sharifuddin, J., Rezai, G., Abdullah, A. M., Latif, I. A., & Mohayidin, M. G. (2012). Clients' perception towards JAKIM service quality in Halal certification. Journal of Islamic Marketing, 3(1), 59–71.

As per Majlis Ugama Islam Singapore (MUIS) Halal certification Standard (MUIS-HC-S001) – General guidelines for the handling and processing of Halal food 2005, Halal covers:

> 'Food that is allowed for Muslim consumption. For Muslims, it is important for them to ensure that their diet conforms to the guidelines laid down by Islam. The Halalness of food is generally determined by two factors – internal and external. Internal factor refers to the constituents or ingredients of the food, whilst the external factor refers to the manner at which the food is being handled and processed.'
>
> 'Food is deemed Halal if the ingredients used are from Halal sources. In this case, the source of the ingredients, as well as the manner at which the ingredients are being processed and handled play an important role in determining the Halalness of the end product.'
>
> 'With regards to the external factor, it is extremely crucial that Halal food is completely segregated from any non-Halal food and/or *Najis* (a Malay word referring to excrement). Food will change its status from being Halal to non-Halal should it come into contact with any known non-Halal and/or najis substances. Hence, extra effort has to be taken to ensure that Halal food is always labeled as such and kept in a secure place to prevent possible chances of contamination.'
>
> 'The concept of Halal food is incomplete without coupling it with aspects of hygiene and nutrition. From a holistic perspective, food must be Halal, safe for human consumption and carries a high nutritional value.'

It is interesting to note that from my analysis of other religions, the imposition on what one is allowed to eat is not confined to Islam. Varadaraja V. Raman notes that Judaism prescribes kosher and proscribes *treyf* food (a Yiddish word referring to any form of non-kosher food) – in the Old Testament, the various birds of prey and certain species of fowl that are forbidden to enter the kitchen. Only fish with both fins and scales are counted as

kosher[191]. Other foods that are forbidden or may not be eaten in combination include rennin, gelatine, lactose, sodium caseinate (a protein produced from casein in skimmed milk), vitamins, eggs, grape products, fruits, vegetables, and Passover (a major Jewish festival) items[192]. However, food is relatively less strict in Christianity where meat is to be avoided on Friday and eaten only sparingly during Lent. Also, there are several kinds of literature pointing to food taboos prevalent among pristine peoples including the *Orang Asli* of Malaysia (small lizards and leeches are considered unclean) as well as the *Niugini* in Papua New Guinea (earthworms are detested).[193] Compliance with food regulation, in my view, may give a sense of belonging and togetherness in the respective religious groups.

Halal in Malaysia

The Halal industry is deep-rooted within Malaysia – more so than in other countries – because the Malaysian government was quick to recognise the need for Halal certification, from both socio-economic and political perspectives. In 1969, the Conference of Rulers acknowledged the importance of setting up guidelines for Halal food consumption for the Malays. The government acted promptly in setting up the Secretariat of the National Council for Religious Affairs, placed under the purview of the Prime Minister's Department, and rebranded as the Religious Division. Later the Division was renamed as the Islamic Affairs Division to give it due recognition as the body that maintains and preserves the interests of Muslims in Malaysia.

Halal certification was introduced in 1974 as a way to provide confirmation of the status of Halal on consumer food products and goods. This catered to the Muslim population, supporting them in making informed decisions on the products they were buying. Fast forward twenty years to 1994 when Halal institutionalisation reached another milestone with the introduction of a Halal logo to accompany the certificate. Today, Malaysia is one

[191] Varadaraja V. Raman, "Its many aspects in science, religion and culture" *Food Today*, Vol 49, no. 4 (December 2014): 968.
[192] *Ibid*, 971-73.
[193] Victor Benno Meyer-Rochow, "Food taboos: their origin and purposes" *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine,* (June 2019): 5:18

of the few countries where Halal is protected by the government (through JAKIM), which has well served (so far) Malaysia's Halal brand. JAKIM is Malaysia's authority on all things related to Islam and safeguards the sanctity of the religion. As such, JAKIM is the gatekeeper of the Halal industry in Malaysia and is the sole dispenser of the Halal certificate in Malaysia.

As the Halal industry has grown in recent years, many companies now use Halal certification to strengthen their brand and penetrate new markets. The establishment of the Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC) in 2006, by former Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, served to further highlight the importance of the Halal industry to Malaysia and the push to govern the industry. HDC has served as an example of a Halal industry development authority for countries around the world; Pakistan has set up its equivalent, called the 'Halal Development Council', an NGO dedicated to the development of the Halal economy in Pakistan.

The governance model of the Halal industry is complex as it involves the interplay of influence from the religious bodies – at a Federal level JAKIM, and State level *Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri* (JAIN) and *Majlis Agama Islam Negeri* (MAIN) – as well as the State and Federal government agencies. These agencies execute their mandates and duties as stipulated in certain Acts related to Halal.[194] In addition to this, several other agencies also shape the Halal landscape one way or another.

[194] There are several Acts covering Halal in Malaysia. (1) The Act include Consumer Protection Act 1999 to protect consumers from the use of certain items that are not "products" while the halal aspect also involves a process for the production of the product, (2) Trade Description Act 2011 that empower JAKIM, JAIN and MAIN as a recognised body to issue Halal certification, (3) Food Act 1983 protects consumers by ensuring that any food supplied cannot contain elements that are harmful to health either in terms of food preparation, sale and consumption something foodstuffs, (4) Food Regulations 1985 contain provisions related to sampling procedures, labelling, packaging and so on, and (5) Food Hygiene Regulation 2009 prescribe matters relating to food hygiene, including food premises used in the preparation, preservation, packaging, storage, shipment, distribution or sale of any food such as factories, restaurants and food truck.

i. Empowering JAKIM as an Official Certifier

The initial processes of Halal certification took the form of 'Halal certification letters', which were issued by the Research Centre of the Islamic Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Office. This eventually involved the establishment of the Halal logo in 1994. On 30 September 1998, Halal inspections were carried out by *Ilham Daya Sendirian Berhad*, a private company appointed by the government.[195]


No. Standard : MS 1500 : 2009

KERAJAAN MALAYSIA
GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA

Sijil Pengesahan
CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICATION
HALAL

JABATAN KEMAJUAN ISLAM MALAYSIA

Ketua Pengarah / Director General
JABATAN KEMAJUAN ISLAM MALAYSIA (JAKIM)
DEPARTMENT OF ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT MALAYSIA

Figure 3-1: Certification of Halal Malaysia

Halal Malaysia certification is issued by a competent authority – JAKIM and state religious authorities, JAIN or MAIN – on products, outlet/premises, logistics and slaughterhouses that complied with the requirements of the Malaysian Halal Certification Procedure Manual 2014. The manual comprises details of Malaysia Halal standards and contains general requirements from starting the application for certification process through to monitoring for compliance activity. It includes the Fatwa (religion ruling) and

[195]See Halal Malaysia Official Portal, "Halal History," http://www.halal.gov.my (accessed 6 December 2018).

the related regulations imposed by relevant authorities such as the Ministry of Health and the Department of Veterinary Services. As per the certificate above, it is the Government of Malaysia endorsing the Halal product, while JAKIM's Director-General is signing on behalf of the government.

The certification system covers the various aspects of the supply chain; as described by Johan Fischer, Halalness of a product is based on the context and handling of that product.[196] The institutionalisation of Halal knowledge and practices is documented as Halal Certification Procedure Manual 2014. The manual covers seven certification schemes, namely: i) Food product/ beverages/food supplement; ii) Food Premise (including restaurant, food court, cafeteria and others); iii) Consumer Goods; iv) Cosmetic and Personal Care (covering all materials and preparation made for contact with various outer layers of the body) or on teeth and mucus in the mouth); v) Slaughterhouse; vi) Pharmaceutical (products in the form of finished dosage including prescribed and non-prescribed medicinal products) that have been registered with the Drug Control Authority; and vii) Logistics (services for transportation of goods and/ or cargo chain services or warehousing and related activities or retailing related to management and handling of food, beverages, and goods).[197]

Apart from Islamic-related requirements, Halal certification knowledge and practices incorporate modern methods and general business requirements for applicants or manufacturers such as the following: i) being a Malaysian registered corporation; ii) holding a business license from local authorities, or having a testimonial from a government agency; iii) being in full operation before an application is made; iv) produce and/or handle only Halal products in compliance with the specified Halal standard; v) using materials or ingredients that are Halal and choosing suppliers who supply Halal materials or have obtained a recognised Halal certificate; vi) apply for all types of products/menu that are produced by the factory/premise; vii) ensuring that applications for repackaging are accompanied by a recognised Halal certificate for said products.

[196] Johan Fisher 'Muslim consumption and anti-consumption in Malaysia' Journal of Islamic Research, Vol. 9, Issue 2, 2015, pp. 68-87
[197] Manual Procedure for Malaysia Halal Certification (Third Revision) 2014

Segregating Halal and non-Halal products is important in maintaining Halal integrity and authenticity. Hence the Manual listed the following application types that would not be eligible for certification: i) non-Halal products; ii) applications with no standard reference or guidelines; iii) businesses that produce and distribute both Halal and non-Halal products; iv) usage of similar branding for Halal and non-Halal products; v) products or premises that relate to negative implications towards religion and that house social activities such as karaoke and entertainment centres, and sellers of drugs, cigarettes, hair dye, nail polish and similar product; vi) sellers of natural products which do not involve any processing, such as fresh fish, fresh vegetables, fresh eggs and the like; vii) fertiliser and animal feed marketers; viii) crockery manufacturers; ix) paper producers; x) hotels with kitchens that prepare pork-based menus; xi) marketers of local and imported finished products that are relabelled without undergoing any processes in Malaysia; xii) kitchen/food premise/food catering services that prepare haram cuisine as decreed in *Syariah* law; xiii) products that are in the early stages of research and development; xiv) products that can lead to deviation of *aqidah* (an Arabic word meaning creed), superstition and deception; and xv) products that use the name or synonymous names of non-Halal products or confusing terms such as ham, bak kut teh, bacon, beer, rum, hotdog, charsiew and similar.

Figure 3-2: Relevant news indicating the product name really matters

Nonetheless, there were concerns raised in certain quarters about the interpretation of the non-eligible products, especially on the use of synonymous names with non-Halal products. For example, the controversy surrounding the Halalness of 'hot dogs' (as shown in Figure 3-2 above) JAKIM's Director Dr. Sirajuddin Suhaimee was quoted by BBC News on 19 October 2016 saying that the name 'hot dog might cause confusion'.[198] This was after JAKIM's rejection of a Halal application requested by store franchise Auntie Anne's where Dr. Sirajuddin suggested the replacement of 'pretzel sausage' as more appropriate than the original 'pretzel dog'. In his knee jerk reaction, Minister of Tourism Nazri Aziz slammed the ruling as 'stupid and backward'. The ruling has also stirred huge debate among Malaysians on social media. This compelled Hishammuddin Hussein, Defence Minister and a senior member of UMNO to suggest that JAKIM take public opinion into consideration when making decisions. Finally, the Minister-in-charge of Religious Affairs, Jamil Khir Baharom, had to clarify in a press conference that it was ingredients and not the product name that matters to JAKIM, especially when dealing with something already established and popular such as hot dogs.

As soon as the applicant receives certification, a logo indicating that the product is Halal can be displayed on the product packaging or presented at the outlet or premise. As per the act, rules and related standards, the packaging label shall include the name of the product, the logo with the Malaysian Standard number and the file reference number as illustrated below:

MS1500:2009

1059-02/2008

Figure 3-3: Halal logo for food product scheme

[198] See BBC News Online titled Hot dogs 'must be renamed' in Malaysia, says religious government body published on 19 Oct 2016 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37700495.

Halal certification on products comes with two years' validity and can be withdrawn if there is a breach in the Halal Procedures Manual requirements. For instance, as reported in *The Straits Times Singapore* on 26 May 2015, JAKIM revoked the Halal certificate of the restaurant chain Secret Recipe over issues of cleanliness. According to JAKIM Halal Hub Director Hakimah Mohd Yusuff, 'there has been a violation of the Malaysia Halal Certification Procedures Manual that involves serious cleanliness issues, and has nothing to do with '"haram" ingredients in the processing of products'.[199]

With the enforcement of the Trade Description Act (Revision 2011), the JAKIM Halal logo is the only Halal logo that can be used in Malaysia. It took six long years for the 14 states to allow JAKIM to become the custodian of Halal sanctity, thus demonstrating the importance of 'Halal' in Malaysia. There was a case reported by media on 26 September 2016 where the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA) chairman, Zahidi Zainul Abidin, was reported saying that RISDA will collaborate with the Malaysia Institute of International Islamic Cooperation (IKIAM) in their joint initiative to launch a new Halal logo.[200] In an immediate response, Director-General of JAKIM, Tan Sri Othman Mustapha, issued the following statement:

> If IKIAM and RISDA intend to directly issue the new logo for Muslim products by RISDA smallholders, then it contravenes the Trade Descriptions (Certification and Marking of Halal) Order 2011, which clearly states that only JAKIM, JAIN, and MAIN are the competent authorities in issuing Halal certification.[201]

As such, JAKIM takes the certification process (and their role as the guardians of 'Halal') seriously. Their prominent role as a guardian and the sole authority of Halal in Malaysia is apparent and cannot be understated. For example, an incident on 24 May 2014 caused a

[199] See The Straits Times Singapore "Malaysia revokes halal certificate of restaurant chain Secret Recipe due to 'cleanliness issues" https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysia-revokes-halal-certificate-of-restaurant-chain-secret-recipe-due-to-cleanliness 26 May 2015
[200] As reported in The Malay Mail Online entitled JAKIM: New halal logo for Muslim-made products illegal without our certification. https://www.malaymail.com/s/1214005/jakim-new-halal-logo-for-muslim-made-products-illegal-without-our-certifica.
[201] *Ibid.*

nationwide uproar from selected Muslim groups in Kuala Lumpur when the rumor of a porcine tainted Cadbury product cropped up on social media. It was later confirmed by the Ministry of Health that the report originated from one of its laboratories and the affected batches were tainted.[202] (In the next chapter, I will discuss further the overreactions by certain groups and consumer associations.)

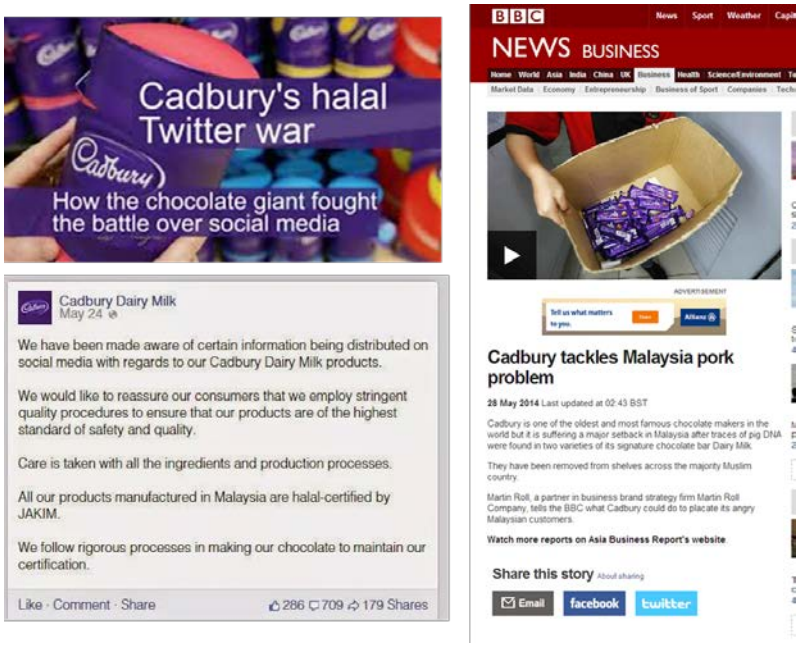


Figure 3-4: A rumour of porcine taint cropped up on social media prompting call for a nationwide boycott on all Cadbury products in Malaysia

In an interview with *Mingguan Malaysia* (1 June 2018), the JAKIM Director-General stressed that the Ministry of Health should have discussed the issue with JAKIM prior to making any announcement on Halal. Based on an analysis by the Chemistry Department of samples of the two products taken directly from Cadbury's factory, JAKIM had, on 2 June 2014, announced there were in fact no traces of porcine contamination. This issue illustrates the lack of inter-agency cooperation and coordination in managing crises as

[202] On 23 May 2014, photos of confidential, unverified lab test report dated 27 February 2014 showing the two batches in Cadbury dairy products; Cadbury Dairy Milk Hazelnut 175g with batch number 200813M01H I2 (expired on 3 November 2014) and Cadbury Dairy Milk Roast Almond Batch 175g with batch number 221013N01R I1 (expired on 15 January 2015) were tested positive for porcine DNA went viral on media social. On 24 May 2014, the Ministry of Health confirmed that the report was issued by one of its laboratories and the affected batches were tainted. The immediate response by Cadbury was recalled the affected batches from markets.

both JAKIM and the Ministry of Health should have resolved their difference in lab findings internally without causing a commotion among Muslim consumers. Also, the incident has increased the public role of audits and inspections to ensure internal organisational compliance. However, as Johan Fischer explores to what extent audit culture is compatible with the point that the underlying principles behind Halal remain 'divine order' and that the 'Halalness' of products is not verifiable: smell, texture or taste cannot fully determine whether a product is Halal.[203] Therefore, he argues that audits and inspections 'seem to take on lives of their own'.[204] Nonetheless, the process of obtaining Halal certification is to ensure that Halal integrity is not compromised for quick economic gain and that the issue of Halal is not taken lightly.

Being the only certifying body for Halal in Malaysia translates to a direct commercial impact from JAKIM's activities. Therefore, it is crucial for JAKIM to be efficient and effective in processing the applications and issuing the Halal certificate; if they are not, there is a direct economic cost to businesses. The mixture of economics and a religious concept is sometimes challenging to harmonise, and as such, the commercial impact of JAKIM's activities is a critical success factor if Malaysia hopes to propel herself, to becoming a global Halal hub. The commercial impact of JAKIM certification has impediments and knock-on consequences and may be used as a deterrent to Foreign Direct Investment and Domestic Direct Investment, restricting the growth of Malaysia in the Halal arena. As such, the link between the Halal certification process and the development of the Halal industry should not be taken lightly if the Malaysian government intends to become a leading global Halal hub. According to the Religious Affairs Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Dr. Mujahid Yusof Rawa, as of January 2019, JAKIM has issued Halal certificates to 7,204 companies and recognised 75 foreign certification bodies and Halal authorities from 43 countries.[205]

[203] Johan Fischer, *Islam, Standards, and Technoscience in Global Halal Zones*. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 18
[204] *Ibid*, 19
[205] *Borneo Post* 30 Jan 2019 'JAKIM gives Halal Certificates to 7,204 companies'

ii. Institutionalising Knowledge and Practices through Standards Malaysia

The institutionalisation of Halal knowledge and practices does not include the food and beverage sector alone, but also others such as cosmetics, personal care, pharmaceuticals, and even logistics. This is a reflection of a larger process of Islamisation by the state where regulation and industry development meet. As Johan Fischer argues, standardisation is apparent in State Halal certification, and is also market-driven.[206] As industries that embrace the Halal platform become more diverse and complex, the expertise required to certify these 'new' industries must grow in tandem to address the increasing need for Halal certification. Therein lies the opportunity for industry talent beyond religious scholars who are unable to deal with industry-related issues. Qualified scientists in fields such as chemistry, food technology or pharmaceuticals could contribute valuable expertise.

Lawrence Busch, as cited by Johan Fischer, argues that standards are part of the moral economy of the modern world that set norms for behaviour and create uniformity.[207] The state administers the proper conduct of Halal compliance in production, preparation, storage, transportation, distribution and other processes through 15 standards related to the Halal industry – as developed by the Department of Standards Malaysia.[208] The standards are intended not to be used only for certification but also acting as a guideline for the organisation and management of operation according to Islamic principles and market best practices. It is worth noting that Malaysia has been cited to produce some of the first Halal standards in the world; for example, the MS 2424: 2012 (standard on pharmaceuticals).[209] Additionally, JAKIM is the first certification body, to use and verify

[206] See Johan Fischer 'Islam, Standards and Technoscience' pg. 14
[207] Busch, Lawrence. 2000. "The Moral Economy of Grades and Standards." Journal of Rural Studies 16: 273–283.
[208] Kasim, Ridzwan. "An Update on Malaysian Standards on Halal". Paper presented at Halal Certification Bodies Conference 2018, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, 1-2 April 2018.
[209] MS2424:2012 was developed by the Standards Malaysia in collaboration with JAKIM, the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA), industry representatives and subject matter experts from both *Syariah* and science. Prior to the availability of this standard, the Halal food standard MS1900 had been referred to as a stand-in guide by the pharmaceutical manufacturers. This was not ideal, as the Halal Food Standard was not tailored to the complexities and peculiarities of the pharmaceutical industry, which is highly regulated by the government, adopting a high professionalism approach.

the production of pharmaceuticals by this standard. The Malaysian Halal Food Standard (MS 1500:2004 [first revision]), has been cited by Codex Alimentarius Commission, as the best example in the world in terms of the justification of Halal food and was adopted by the United Nation.

Next, to Halal standards, the institutionalisation of Halal knowledge extends to a wide range of *thoyyiban* (an Arabic word meaning wholesomeness, safe to consume and not harmful) standards of which some are adopted as local MS Standard addressing farm management, food safety (such as GMP and HACCP), environment (ISO 14001) etc. In Malaysia, however, Halal standards require a relatively high standard for *toyyiban* practices. This is one of the reasons that many small and medium enterprises are unable to get their products certified.

iii. Auditing for Ensuring Compliance

Halal audit shares the same basic tenets and functions of traditional audit systems but focuses on the compliance of Islamic principles and guidelines. As it relates to religious principles, the role of auditor, unlike contemporary practices, is not confined to being liable to clients. In this regard, the Halal auditors have a duty of care to conduct their auditing activities in prudent and ethical ways and practice 'absolute accountability' – to mankind and their God. I am guided by the scope of auditing as postulated in Al-Quran:

> Then as for he who is given his record in his right hand, He will be judged with an easy account, and return to his people in happiness.
> (Surah al-Insyiqaq: Verses 6-9).

> And indeed, [appointed] over you are keepers, Noble and recording; they know whatever you do.
> (Surah Al Infithar: Verses 10-12).

> "Surely Allah takes account of all things"
> (Surah al-Nisa': Verse 82).

The general meaning of Islamic auditing 'is to watch and inspect the operations of reviewing, controlling and reporting about transactions and dealing for correcting to the non-compliance, according to rules and Islamic jurisprudence to provide useful, right, timely trust and fair reports for decision making'.[210]

Halal audit practices in Malaysia integrate Islamic guidelines as well as the accepted cultural practices, reflecting the growing sensibilities of ever-demanding consumers. Therefore, as argued by Johan Fischer, institutions such as JAKIM and MUIS established their own set of expanding 'Islamic' requirements and forms of regulation to accommodate local and foreign businesses.[211] It is important to note that JAKIM introduced the Halal Assurance System that serves as part of the internal control mechanism in Halal monitoring, controlling, improving and preventing any non-compliance in production. In this regard, the manufacturer is responsible for developing and managing the Halal Assurance System to ensure the Halal integrity of the entire supply chain is preserved. This includes ensuring the materials are procured from legitimate Halal suppliers. A case in point is when a popular IKEA food outlet in Mutiara Damansara, Malaysia was raided by officials from the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, the Selangor Religious Affairs Department (otherwise known as *Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor*), Malaysian Muslim Consumer Association and police on 15 March 2005 due to suspected non-Halal sausages. This followed raids at their suppliers – Muller Sausages Haus Sdn. Bhd. and Pacific Refrigerating Sdn. Bhd. at Kompleks Selayang Industrial Zone for suspected non-compliance with Halal manufacturing requirements where Halal certificates of the factories had expired in January 2004. As an immediate response, the Management of IKEA had to immediately close down their food outlet (despite the fact that the authorities had only asked them to stop selling the sausages), issued press releases informing the public about the incident and their remedial actions, and conducted a ritual cleansing or *Samak*. The outlet

[210] Md. Helal Uddin, Md. Hafij Ullah and Md. Musharof Hossain, "An Overview on the basics of Islamic Audit", *European Journal of Business and Management* Vol.5, No.28 (2013):9

[211] According to Johan Fischer audit and inspection systems are a feature of modern societies exist to generate comfort and reassurance in a wide range of policy contexts. To large extent, auditing is about cultural and economic authority granted to auditors based on course of assumption that those auditors are competent and their practices effective. See Johan Fischer *Islam, Standards, and Technoscience* Routledge London and NY 2016:20

reopened for business on 26 March 2005 and went on to become more popular than before. The actions by the management included terminating a supply agreement with the suppliers of the suspect sausages, removing sausages from the menu and imposing a signed statute of declaration to their 11 frozen food suppliers confirming that the suppliers' current Halal certificates were valid.[212]

Hence, the importance of setting up an Internal Halal Committee by manufacturers or food operators as a focal point in managing Halal matters. This is especially important when JAKIM grants Halal certification to non-Muslim owner-operators. This committee works closely with the Halal auditors' team from JAKIM or JAIN/MAIN in the audit process so that effective monitoring, controlling, improving and preventing any non-compliance in production can be undertaken. (The following chapter looks at this committee in more detail.)

On-premises audit and enforcement are conducted with at least two Muslim officers with authority and power. Other officers from relevant agencies may also be invited to participate. This periodic inspection is done systematically to ensure compliance with the Halal Manual Procedure. The period for inspection starts at any time after the certificate has been issued. In the case of inspection due to complaints (fraud, abuse of certificate/logo, doubt on the ingredients, doubt of formulation, cleanliness, incorrect slaughter and doubt of stunning), inspection is carried out immediately after receiving the public complaint. Inspection is by an Islamic officer with authority power and another officer from the Enforcement Division, Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs or the Department of Veterinary Services or the Local Council.

iv. HDC as a Promotion Agency

As the Halal industry is still relatively new (at least on a global scale), Malaysia's long history with Halal, and as a predominantly Muslim country, gives Malaysia an advantage, one that lies with being seen as a role model for all matters related to the development of

[212] Dilip Mutum, Sanjit Kumar Roy, Eva Kipnis *Marketing Cases from Emerging Markets - Case Study 4: Ikea Malaysia and the Halal Food Crisis* Heidelberg 2014

Halal. That country's approach in developing the industry is holistic with the end-in-mind of creating an ecosystem where development can be achieved in a sustainable manner. This ambition is evident in various academic and business literature. In keeping within the scope of this thesis, I define industry support as the required resources for capacity building, funding and incentives, and brand integrity.

The establishment of the Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC) on 18 September 2006 by Malaysia's fifth Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, served to further highlight the importance of the Halal industry to Malaysia and the push to govern the industry. The setting up of HDC as the lead agency to develop the Halal industry will give this sector the impetus and focus it needs.[213] At the initial stage of establishment, one of the HDC's first tasks was to promote awareness of the Halal industry. Even though the Halal industry has been around since the 1970s, it has taken a large commercial role only in relatively recent years. HDC's activities, among others, include: fostering the development of Halal companies, increasing their capacity, assisting companies to gain Halal certification, nurturing companies that have the potential to export, attracting investments to the Halal industry, educating industry players on the topic of Halal, logging industry complaints and developing Halal parks. Since its establishment, HDC has been working together with all agencies in the Halal Industry, from the certification body of JAKIM to SME development with SME Corp., investment with MIDA, and utilising MATRADEs export connections. HDC has been working alongside all Halal related stakeholders in order to spearhead the development of the Halal industry.

During the keynote address by the HRH Sultan of Perak Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah at World Halal Forum in 5 April 2018, the Royal Highness acknowledged the ongoing work of HDC. Since its establishment, HDC has implemented various initiatives with the aim not only of furthering the development of the Halal industry locally, but fostering its

[213] See The Star Online, "HDC to drive Malaysia's halal industry" 9 May 2006. https://www.thestar.com.my/business/business-news/2006/05/09/hdc-to-drive-malaysias-halal-industry/

ecosystem beyond Malaysia.[214] According to HDC's website, their key activities include: fostering the development of Halal companies, increasing their capacity, assisting companies to gain Halal certification, nurturing companies that have the potential to export, attracting investments to the Halal industry, educating industry players on the topic of Halal, logging industry complaints and developing Halal parks. Within all aspects of industry development, HDC plays a role as either a driver or facilitator.

It is worth noting there is no other institution in the world with the sole objective of Halal industry development like the HDC. The HDC's establishment by Abdullah Ahmad Badawi formed part of what Johan Fischer refers to as the Prime Minister's 'Halal fantasy'.[215] The desire of Abdullah, who took office after Mahathir Mohammad in 2003, was to promote Halal as part of what Fischer refers to as state nationalism in Malaysia represented by UMNO. Halal in Malaysia has become a legitimate taste and a kind of national cuisine or model standardised by the state. Halal benefits the *ummah*, reconceptualised as ethical Muslim producers, traders and consumers, and even acts as a revival of the golden past of Islamic trade networks.[216]

Ironically, the leadership of HDC, in particular Chairman Rizuan Abdul Hamid (who served from 2016 to 2019) is also the Head of UMNO Kepong.[217] He was appointed in 2016 to replace Professor Syed Jalaluddin Syed Salim when Malaysia was under the leadership of Najib Razak.[218] During that time there were many politically-connected personalities appointed as chairman at various government-linked corporations.

There was also a series of events leading to my argument that the HDC serves as an example of government using state apparatus for political gain. In the early setup, HDC

[214] See The News Straits Times, "Fostering a true halal economy: Global Integration and Ethical Practice" 6 April 2018.
https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/columnists/2018/04/353789/fostering-true-halal-economy-global-integration-and-ethical.
[215] Johan Fischer, "Cast the net wider -How a vision of global halal market is overcoming network envy", DIIS Working Paper no 2008/28, 6.
[216] *Ibid.*
[217] See https://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/person.asp?personId=233596314&privcapId=7949387.
[218] See Professor Tan Sri Syed Jalaluddin Syed Salim profile at https://asia.bettshow.com/speakers/tan-sri-dato%E2%80%99-syed-jalaludin-syed-salim.

was placed under the purview of the Prime Minister's Office (Economic Planning Unit). Soon after Ahmad Zahid Hamidi was appointed as a Minister in charge of Religious Affairs, HDC was placed there. Later it changed to the Ministry of International Trade and Industry when Ahmad Zahid changed his portfolio to the Ministry of Defence. Last year (2019), HDC changed its reporting ministry back to the Prime Minister's Office (Economic Planning Unit).

In respect to Halal certification, it was during Ahmad Zahid as a Minister in charge of Religious Affairs, that the cabinet decided to transfer the function of Halal certification from JAKIM to HDC. In April 2008, HDC started issuing its own Halal certificate but not without difficulty, especially when exporters faced problems getting their products into Indonesia where the new certificates were not accepted. In July 2009, the Minister in charge of Religious Affairs, Jamil Khir Baharom, announced the transfer of Halal certification from HDC back to JAKIM on the basis that the roles of the issuance of Halal certificates and the development of the regional and global Halal markets would be divided between the two agencies[219]. Similarly, at an event in Bagan Datuk, Perak (a state located in Peninsular Malaysia), Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, the local Member of Parliament, announced that HDC planned to develop the second-largest slaughterhouse and feedlot area in Asia[220]. The announcement was coincidently made two months before the General Election on 9 May 2018 in what was perceived to be part of a political campaign. This is somewhat mind-boggling because cattle farming in Malaysia is perceived as highly risky due to bad experiences in the past, the closure of big cattle farms and their cost-intensive nature.[221]

Changes in the political landscape post-2018 have snowballed to include changes in leadership at various government-linked institutions and, including HDC's Chief Executive Officer Jamil Bidin. Among the new programs established by HDC perhaps,

[219] See The Star, "Management of halal certs transferred back to Jakim" at https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2009/07/10/ management-of-halal-certs-transferred-back-to-jakim/#Y0HbshSpHG2qsxdK.99.
[220] See The Star, "Zahid backs HDC slaughterhouse plan in Bagan Datuk" at https://www.thesundaily.my/archive/zahid-backs-hdc-slaughterhouse-plan-bagan-datuk-FUARCH535212.
[221] Dr Quaza Nizamuddin Hassan Nizam. "Many not keen to venture into livestock business" Interview by Tasnim Lokman, *The News Straits Times* June 3, 2018.

the 'game-changer' was the setting up of the Global Halal Support Centre (GHSC) aimed at addressing the need for a comprehensive reference centre and database for the Halal industry.

v. Operationalising Halal by Supporting Institutions

The governance structure reflects the activities of the relevant agencies responsible for Halal development in Malaysia. The overall structure is far-reaching as Halal is embedded in various government agencies across many industries and involves many different players.

	Institutions	**Halal-related Roles**
1	Ministry of Entrepreneur Development	This is a newly created ministry dedicated to developing competitive entrepreneurs with integrity. The ministry had recently (January 2019) hosted Malaysia Halal Expo which focused on promoting opportunities for Malaysian entrepreneurs at Japan 2020 Olympics.
2	Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE)	The driver of brand integrity due to their arrangement of the Malaysian International Halal Showcase (MIHAS). This promotion of Malaysia as a key figure in the Halal industry has helped Malaysian products gain exposure to the international market, and has helped to drive Halal exports.
3	SME Corp	Facilitator in the arena of capacity-building, as although SME Corp. does provide valuable capacity-building programs, none is aimed specifically for the development of Halal SMEs. The facilitator role is credited to SME Corp. as it is recognized that Halal SMEs can still benefit from these capacity-building programs.
4	Standards Malaysia	The enabler of brand integrity as the 'Halal standards' they produce essentially protect the integrity of Malaysia's Halal. Providing the framework and guidelines for certification essentially means that integrity is also 'looked after'.
5	Malaysia Investment Development Corporation (MIDA)	The driver of funding and incentives for the Halal industry as they provide Halal-specific tax incentives. They drive the role of Halal incentives in Halal parks and provide for tax incentives for the production of Halal food.

6	Department of Veterinary Services (DVS)	Play a role in the facilitation of brand integrity as they ensure that animals exported and imported into Malaysia carry the necessary certificates and meet a minimum standard of requirement. They facilitate the flow of animal-based exports in and out of the country. Their role in ensuring animal safety and health means that DVS facilitates the brand integrity of Malaysia's Halal. They are governed by the Animal Rules Act 1962.
7	Department of Chemistry Malaysia	Play a role in the product analysis and traceability of Halal products. Specializing in Halal DNA, research and product quality assurance. As such, they play a facilitator role in brand integrity as they test the integrity of Halal products. There are two acts governing their activities namely Food Act 1983 (Act 281) and Food Regulation 1985.
8	Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs	Enforcer of brand integrity; as outlined with the Trade Description Act 1975 (revision 2011 on the use of expression 'Halal' and marking of Food). Working in tandem with *JAKIM*, the ministry provides enforcement and monitoring capabilities to protect the Halal logo and consumers' interests.
9	Ministry of Health	Responsible for all matters pertaining to food safety. Their roles are governed by the Food Act 1983 (Act 281) and Food Regulations 1985.
10	Halal Product Research (HPRI)	Serves as a testing laboratory and Halal analysis on food and non-food products.
11	Malaysia Technology Development Corporation (MTDC)	Provide Halal Technology Development funding to companies, and the related advisory services and networks to companies in bringing their Halal products and services to market.

Source: Information in Figure 3-5 is publically available and collected from the relevant institutions' websites.

Figure 3-5: Halal diffusion into other supporting institutions

Each institution contributes to Halal development in different ways; however, with the exception of JAKIM and HDC, most agencies do not have a focus on Halal. Rather Halal is a sub-sector of different industries or is part of the larger group; consequently, the Halal focus among these institutions is limited.

vi. Sanctioning and Regulating Halal

Insofar as protection of Halal certification is concerned, there is no specific act that focuses on such protection. Halal is governed through the Food Act (1983) and the Trade Description (Certification and Marking of Halal) Order (revision 2011). In terms of pharmaceuticals, the Ministry of Health is the main regulator, which prohibits Halal certification of prescription medicines.

Trade Description (Definition of Halal) Order 2011 (effectively enforced on 1 January 2012) by the Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs specifically defines Halal with respect to food and services. The act prohibits any activities from misleading or confusing consumers with Halal products. Another Trade Description (Certification and Marking of Halal) Order 2011 (effectively enforced on 1 January 2012) by the same Ministry ensures Halal certification (with only the JAKIM logo) on food, goods and services to fall in line with the certifiable standard. This act is to protect Halal integrity and provide assurance that the product is safe for consumption by Muslims. For imported products, certification by a JAKIM recognised Halal body is acceptable. Any contravention to the provisions of this Order is an offense and is liable for punishment.

False labelling is policed by the Ministry of Health (Act 281 – Food Act 1983 Section 13). Any person who – prepares, packages, labels or sells any food in a manner that is false, misleading, or deceptive, with regards to its character, nature, value, substance, quality, composition, merit or safety, strength, purity, weight, origin, age, or proportion, or in contravention of any regulation made under this Act – commits an offence, and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term, not exceeding three years, or to a fine, or to both.

vii. Commercialising Halal: Its Diffusion into National Economic Influence

The inclusion of Halal into strategic economic thrusts serves as the impetus for commercialising and mainstreaming Halal into the national agenda. The Halal imperative began in Second Industrial Master Plan (IMP2) in 1996; here, the emphasis was placed

on the promotion of export-led growth and a heavy focus on moving up the value chain (i.e. increased value-added services). The Halal push was further integrated into the national agenda, with the highlight on the development of the Halal food industry in the Third National Agricultural Policy (NAP3) in 1998. Since then, Halal has made an 'appearance' in the consecutive 9th, 10th and 11th Malaysia Plans (Malaysia's 5-year development plan), and is also heavily mentioned in the Third Industrial Master Plan (IMP3).

The IMP3 states that 'initiatives will be undertaken to develop Malaysia as a major producer of Halal products and services, Malaysia will leverage upon its international recognition as a modern and progressive Islamic country to gain access to the export market for its Halal products and services'.[222] In the 11th Malaysian Plan (2016–2020), the government envisaged Halal as a source of competitive advantage for companies and serving as a catalyst for their growth, especially for export markets, that would eventually benefit the country. Exports are further promoted leveraging on Mutual Recognition Agreements with key trading countries. Further, the internationalisation of Halal Malaysia certification includes extending the certification services for contract manufacturing and overseas factories to obtain Halal certification[223] and provide the related advisory services to other countries. In addition, more supports such as tax incentives would encourage more local manufacturers to opt for Halal certification.

Halal strategies recommended in the 11th Malaysian Plan (2016–2020) reflect Malaysia's ambition to maintain her position as the global Halal hub through establishing more connectivity and linkages with the global markets. This includes both the tangible supply chain aspects, such as the movement of Halal-compliant raw materials to manufacturers and distributors, and the intangible, including the online e-trading platform for Halal to be globally traded. In this regard, the Halal ingredient database will serve to provide information about ingredients, additives and approved suppliers and new product innovation in the market. The strategic importance of this database extends beyond

[222] IMP3 Third Industrial Masterplan 2006-2020, 511.
[223] See Borneo Post Online '*JAKIM gives halal certificates to 7,204 companies*. http://www.theborneopost.com/2019/01/30/jakim-gives-halal-certificates-to-7204-companies/.

processed food and also includes other sectors such as the manufacturing of cosmetics and personal care products.

Notwithstanding all the above plans, I argue that there is no clear method of measuring the impact of Halal to the economy as it cuts across several industries, and Halal as a method of data segmentation is often overlooked. There is, consequently, difficulty in measuring the impact of the Halal industry on Malaysia's economy. This presents a challenge as it often leads to undervaluing or overvaluing Malaysia's Halal industry and leads to some confusion in the governing of the Halal industry.

Halal in Singapore

As highlighted in the previous section, the principle adopted by the secular state Singapore with respect to religious practices is that society's interests take precedence over those of individuals. Hence, any movements deemed as exposing the threat to national security, public order and good governance are subject to government regulation. This is as stipulated in an imperative policy intervention act known as the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill (1990) that empowers the state to separate religion from politics. Specifically, the Act allows the authorities to act against those sowing religious discord and ensures that religion is not exploited for political or subversive purposes. Although it may seem that secularism has removed religion from state affairs, in reality, it has not. Suzaina Kadir suggests that Singapore's secularism means there is no official state religion, and no religion is given any special privileges.[224]

Maintaining this secularism, however, as posited by Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, Alexius A. Pereira and Bryan S. Turner, means the government must attempt to manage religions as they cannot ignore the fact that religious diversity without management will, in all probability, end in communal tensions.[225] This is deemed more prevalent in the case of Islam; for example, in the past, incidents such as the Maria Hertogh controversy in

[224] Suzana Kadir *'Islam, State and Society in Singapore'*, Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, 5 (3) 357-371 :362.
[225] Nasir, K., Pereira, A. A., Turner, B. *Muslims in Singapore: Piety, politics, and policies.* London: Routledge (2010):3.

1950[226] and mass violence in 1964 and 1969[227] were lessons of the disruptive potential of communalism. A study by Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir *et al.* suggests that the practice of religious piety tends to lead towards a certain social gap between social groups that potentially harden into separate enclaves.[228] Hence the motivation by Singapore to manage such social processes 'in the interests of creating a social unity and where possible it should seek to convince its citizens that such social harmony is not simply artificial'.[229] As aptly stated by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during an international conference organised to mark the 50th anniversary of MUIS on 7 November 2018:

> By creating opportunities for interfaith interaction and strengthening interfaith ties, we protect ourselves against forces that might otherwise tear our society asunder. […] Singapore has established social norms of compromise and accommodation between people of different faiths after years of hard work.[230]

Under the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Bill, the state introduced the Presidential Council for Religious Harmony with primary roles to provide advisory services and report on matters pertaining to the maintenance of religious harmony referred to it by the Ministry of Home Affairs or Parliament.[231] The Council also makes recommendations on restraining orders against any leader or member of any religious group or institution who incites inter-religious strife or who conducts political or subversive activities under the pretext of propagating or practicing any religious belief.[232] Members of the Council include representatives of the major religions in Singapore. Any action to create such tension will trigger an immediate reaction from the relevant institution. For example,

[226] Riots began after Singapore court decided that Maria Huberdina Bertha Hertogh (born at Tjimahi, Java, on 24 March, 1937 to a Dutch soldier Adrianus Petus Hertogh and her mother Adeline Hertogh) who had been adopted and raised by Che Aminah binte Mohamed (a Muslim), as a Muslim and in the Malay way of life should be returned to her Catholic parents.
[227] Riots involving clashes between Malays and Chinese occurred at the time where Singapore was part of the Federation of Malaya. The first series of riots occurred during a Muslim possession held to celebrate Prophet Muhammad's Birthday and second series happened after a mysterious killing of a 57-year-old Malay was killed in Geylang Serai prompted Malays to take retaliatory action against the Chinese.
[228] Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, Alexius A. Pereira and Bryan S. Turner, *Muslims in Singapore: Piety, politics and policies* (Routledge 2010), 3-4.
[229] *Ibid.*
[230] Lai, Linette. 2018. "PM stresses need to update religious harmony laws." *The Straits Times*, Nov 8, 2018. https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/pm-stresses-need-to-update-religious-harmony-laws
[231] See Chapter 167A on function of Council under Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act 1990.
[232] *Ibid.*

MUIS filed a police report immediately after rumours spread on social media that 63 food outlets had Halal certification canceled. As reported in *The Straits Times* (26 April 2019), MUIS takes a serious view against such irresponsible acts that may mislead the public. In the report, MUIS urged the public not to spread unverified information that could cause public confusion.

Halal in Singapore is bureaucratised under Section 88A (1) of Administration of Muslim Act (AMLA) which states that government has the authority to administer and regulate Halal certification:

> The *Majli*s (MUIS) may issue Halal certificates in relation to any products, service or activity and regulate holders of such certificates to ensure that the requirements of the Muslim law comply within the production, processing, marketing or display of that product, the provision of that service or the carrying out of that activity.

This regulation shows government readiness to intervene (via policy instrument) in religious affairs, due to the significance of Halal to the minority Singaporean. In the event of failure to comply, this is further reinforced through Section 88A (7) of AMLA:

> The *Majlis* may revoke or suspend its approval granted to any person to issue any Halal certificate or to use any specified Halal certification mark if that person fails to comply with any condition imposed under subsection (6).[233]

In managing other aspects of religious affairs, such as w*aqf* assets, the Singaporean state has done exceptionally well. *Waqf* is an Islamic philanthropy instrument for which the government has appointed a professional manager, Warees Investment Holdings. This has led to an impressive achievement with the Singaporean *waqf* being among the most developed and structured in the world with assets in 2017 valued at SGD 769 million.

[233] Section 88A (6) states that the *Majli*s may, in granting approval to any person to issue any halal certificate or to use any specified halal certification mark, impose such condition as it thinks fit and may at any time vary, remove or add to such condition

viii. Mainstreaming of Halal by MUIS

MUIS (Majlis Ugama Islam Singapore, the Islamic Regional Council of Singapore) was established in 1968 as the governing body for Singapore's Halal industry when the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA) came into effect. Despite officially registered as a corporate entity, it was structured as a state-linked statutory body under the purview of the Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth and under the direct supervision of the Minister-In-Charge of Muslim Affairs. Their role, as stated on the website, is to ensure that the various interests of Singapore's Muslim community are looked after. Thus, MUIS is responsible for the promotion of religious, social, educational, economic, and cultural activities in accordance with the principles and traditions of Islam as enshrined in the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

The principal functions of MUIS include administration of zakat, *waqf* (or wakaf, meaning endowment), pilgrimage affairs, Halal certification, and da'wah activities. It is also responsible for the construction and administration of mosques as well as their development and management. In addition, MUIS oversees the administration of Madrasah and Islamic education as well as the issuance of fatwas (religious rulings). It also administers the provision of financial relief to poor and needy Muslims and of developmental grants to organisations.[234]

Being a non-Muslim majority country, one of Singapore's first initiatives was to address standards and certification in order to gain the trust of Halal consumers. MUIS formally began Halal services in 1978. The move to set up its Halal Certification Strategic Unit was driven by the increasing demand for Halal-certified products and eating establishments, as well as the need to regulate the Halal industry in Singapore. On 1 January 2019, MUIS appointed a new Chief Executive and a senior management team to continue their agenda of spearheading the socio-religious needs of the Muslim community. The newly appointed Chief Executive Esa Hsien Masood is the youngest (at age 39) ever to lead MUIS. He started his public service in social work after graduating from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States before moving on

[234] See https://www.muis.gov.sg/About-MUIS/Roles-Functions.

to Muslim community matters, holding appointments in the *Syariah* Court and Community Relations Unit for the then Ministry of Community Development and Sports. He joined MUIS as a secretary in 2007.[235]

Figure 3-6: Certification of Halal Singapore

MUIS produces a set of guidelines for Halal certification as stipulated in the Halal Certification Scheme. To be awarded Halal certification, companies must ensure Halal compliance throughout the entire supply chain, from sourcing to storage to production to logistics and, finally, to sales and marketing. The specific requirements for each of these stages were made available in the public domain to ensure transparency between religious

[235] The Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Masagos Zulkifli described Esa Hsien Masood as "sharp, but humble and open to ideas". See *The Straits Times* "MUIS to get new CEO from 1 Jan" at https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/muis-to-get-new-ceo-from-jan-1-0.

and technical requirements. For example, when sourcing for raw materials, the supply has to come from a Halal-certified producer, either from MUIS or MUIS-recognised Islamic bodies. Packaging for raw materials that are Halal-certified must be affixed with a Halal certification mark issued by relevant Islamic bodies. To avoid any contamination all raw materials stored, used, sold or brought into the premises must be properly packed and labelled, and, for purposes of traceability, the label should state the product description, the manufacturer's name, and the plant address. Halal is assured at the production level based on HalMQ guidelines and parameters. Premises used for production should not contain any doubtful or non-Halal products and there should be proper segregation of Halal and non-Halal products. There should be no cross-contamination of tools used for non-Halal food. If such tools have been previously used on pork-related items, they should be ritually cleansed by MUIS-appointed personnel.[236]

An analysis report from accredited laboratories may be needed to help verify that the food has no presence of non-Halal materials. During transportation, all Halal food or raw materials must be properly segregated from non-Halal items. Once approval is granted, MUIS Halal certification mark must be affixed on products before they are sold and marketed.

Application for Halal certification is made through a web-based eHalal Online Application System introduced in November 2007 to enable an efficient and transparent process. Later the system went through some improvements and subsequently incorporated into a centralised government business licensing portal known as LicenseOne on 15 October 2018. This system allows businesses to conduct application, updating, renewal and termination of multiple licenses, including Halal certification simultaneously. Applicants can send their application for new certification or renewal, rectify any error in their application, update their certification details and make payment for their application. Forms need to be submitted, including licenses issued by Agri-food

[236] Ritual cleansing or *Sertu* is for cleasing that involves the highest level of impurity in Islam concerning contamination of physical contact with dog, pigs and its descendant. The protocol and procedures are as stipulated in the Quran involving 3 basic elements namely water, soil or agent of cleansing and procedure of cleansing.

and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), National Environment Agency (NEA) or Health Sciences Authority, a floor plan of the premises, a copy of Muslim staff national registration card/work permit and letter of appointment. MUIS requires at least two Muslim personnel for every premise. The status of the two Muslim personnel must be verified and acknowledged.

As a trading nation, Singapore allows the importation of Halal products. MUIS recognises Halal certification issued by overseas recognised bodies enabling Halal products to be imported into Singapore

ix. HalMQ: Adaptation of religious practices into economic modernity

MUIS established Halal standards in 2007 in order to foster greater transparency and enhance consistency for a company in complying with Halal certification requirements. The Singapore MUIS Halal Standards (SMHS) consists of a religious component (the General Guidelines for Handling and Processing of Halal Food) and a technical component (the General Guidelines for Development and Implementation of Halal Quality Management System).

In March 2008, MUIS in collaboration with SPRING Singapore (currently known as Enterprise Singapore due to a merger with International Enterprise Singapore on 1 April 2018) introduced the MUIS Halal Quality Management System or HalMQ (pronounced as 'Hall Mark'). HalMQ is a set of systems-based Halal requirements that incorporates both the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles.

More specifically, HalMQ is a systems-based and proactive approach towards achieving Halal certification that shifts from a 'product-based approach to a process-based approach'[237] therefore aligning itself to other similar compliance approaches accepted globally, i.e. international standards such as ISO and HACCP.

[237] https://www.muis.gov.sg/-/media/Files/Halal/Documents/HalMQ-Brochure-Final.pdf.

The process-based approach extends across the value chain to enhance Halal compliance and provide assurance to trade buyers on the reliability and 'Halalness' of the products. It ensures that companies meet requirements for both food safety as well as Halal compliance. Companies seeking Halal certification will need to comply with the requirements of HalMQ.

According to the MUIS website, HalMQ has been made compulsory for compliance by certificate holders since 1 January 2010. This is in order to achieve its multiple objectives of enhancing Halal compliance through a more structured and systematic approach: increasing the competitive advantage of Halal-certified companies; further increasing the credibility of Singapore's Halal certification process; meeting the rising expectations of Muslim consumers, and widening international recognition of Singapore's Halal certification. This system covers both religious (handling and processing of Halal food) and technical (development and implementation of Halal Quality Management System). This provides assurance and confidence to consumers about the certification system process, that include the following ten overarching principles in HalMQ certification requirements, which are: i) establishment of the Halal team; ii) defining the product or nature of business to be certified; iii) construction and verification of a flow chart; iv) identification of Halal threats and their control measures; v) determination of Halal Assurance Points (HAPs), their allowable limits, and prescribed practices; vi) establishment of a monitoring system for each HAP; vii) establishment of corrective actions for each HAP; viii) establishment of a documentation and record-keeping system; ix) verification of the Halal system; and x) review of the Halal System.

MUIS adopted a consultative approach in developing Halal standards. The process involved a standard review by Halal standards committee, stakeholders' feedback (local and foreign governments, institutions, scholars, religious and scientific experts, academicians, relevant industries leaders, Halal practitioners, and the general public) to ensure the practicality of such standards.

The proliferation of Halal certification spans the food supply chain comprising seven certification schemes to suit various categories of food and food-related schemes.[238] In addition, MUIS also provides Halal Food Certification for social functions such as luncheons, weddings, seminars, corporate gatherings, and other similar events organised in hotels, exhibition halls, or outdoor locations.

x. Industry Support

Interestingly, despite its secular status, the Singaporean government has been intensively promoting the country as an international hub for Halal. Various enablers have been put in place to ensure the success of this ambition. To spearhead Halal industry development and growth MUIS established its wholly owned subsidiary in 2006, Warees Halal Limited (WHL). WHL is the only MUIS-approved institution that offers advisory services, develops industry capacity building, undertakes global Halal certification services and promotes trade-link services. Their capacity building covers training and education programs to equip and enhance business with the necessary knowledge and skills related to Halal.

It is important to highlight the WHL's roles and mandates are akin to those of HDC in Malaysia but with lesser political objectives (judging by their professional and technical line up of the board of directors). Chairman of the board, Hj Salim is a prominent civil servant and has been a member of the MUIS Council since 2004. He was awarded the Public Services Star 2018 and is a MUIS50 Distinguished Award recipient. Their newly appointed Chief Executive Officer, Dewi Hartaty Suratty (appointed on 1 October 2017) also serves as Director of Asset Policy & Industry Development, responsible for Halal, *Waqf* and Zakat functions at MUIS.

[238] The 7 schemes include (i) Eating Establishment Scheme - This certificate is issued to retail food establishments such as restaurants, school canteen stalls, snack bars, Halal corners, confectioneries, bakery shops, stalls within a food court or its equivalent, and temporary stalls in bazaars, flea market, trade fairs, etc. (ii) Endorsement Scheme - This is issued to imported, exported, or re-exported products for which Halal certificates have already been issued. (iii) Food Preparation Area Scheme - This is issued to catering establishments and central kitchen facilities. (iv) Poultry Abattoir Scheme - This is issued to poultry abattoirs for their freshly slaughtered poultry. (v) Product Scheme - This is issued to products which are manufactured or partly manufactured or processed in Singapore. (vi) Storage Facility Scheme - This is issued to stationary and mobile storage facilities such as warehouses and cold rooms. (vii) Whole Plant Scheme - This is issued to manufacturing facilities and all products manufactured therein.

xi. Audit and Enforcement Practices by Warees

Since the establishment of WHL in 2006, the provision of Halal audit and enforcement has been entrusted to them by MUIS. At the initial stage of operation, officers from MUIS Halal Certification Department were assigned to facilitate the process. As a result, as acknowledged by Sa'adan Man and Norhidayah Pauzi, this has resulted in the speedy issuing of Halal certificates within the span of 14 to 28 days. When compared with Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia, Singapore is the fastest in terms of certificate issuance. Therefore, Singapore is regarded as one of the most effective countries with systematic and efficient procedures. [239]

xii. From pacifying religious and minority rights to harnessing the economic potentials: The Role of Ancillary Institutions

In collaboration with existing agencies and organisations, various initiatives have been developed in Singapore in order to assist companies in tapping into the global Halal market. Some of these initiatives include the introduction of HalMQ in 2008 and its recognition by GCC countries, resulting in increased exports to key Halal markets; providing financial assistance to companies (as administered by Enterprise Singapore); boosting the export sector of Singapore's Halal products by extending recognition of the Halal certificate beyond Singapore (by Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore); providing assistance to companies towards developing innovative products, processes, and packaging in order to gain a competitive edge in the Halal market (this initiative is spearheaded by the Food Innovation and Resource Centre or FIRC); and promoting overseas growth and trade by offering companies advisory and assistance programmes (spearheaded by Enterprise Singapore).

	Institutions	**Halal-related Roles**
1	Ministry of International Trade and Industry	Expansion of Halal certificate recognition beyond Singapore

[239] Sa'adan Man and Norhidayah Pauzi, "The implication of differences in Halal Standard of Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore" *JMFIR* (2017) Vol.14 No. 2: 157-169

2	Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (SPRING)	Responsible in the development of Halal standards
3	Food innovation and resources centre	Assist companies to develop innovative products, processes, and packaging in order to gain a competitive advantage in the Halal market
4	IE Singapore	Promote overseas growth and trade by offering companies advisory and assistance programs
5	Agri-food and Veterinary Authority (AVA)	Works closely with MUIS to ensure that local and imported food products comply with Singapore's food laws and standards.
6	National Environment Agency (NEA)	Regulates the food retail industry in the country to ensure that food sold at retail outlets is safe for consumption. NEA conducts regular checks on food establishments – including those that sell Halal food.

Figure 3-7: Supporting Agencies in Singapore

At present, interested Singaporean food companies can seek financial assistance from SPRING to defray the cost of product innovation, which may be required for the export of Halal products. To this end, companies can draw on two schemes: one is the Innovation Voucher Scheme (IVS) and the other is the Technology Innovation Programme (TIP). The IVS supports projects or services that use technology to enhance or develop new products, processes, applications, practices, or operations, or those that result in the development of new technology capabilities. This financial assistance is worth SGD 5,000, and the voucher can be used to pay for the cost of technology-related projects and services at participating public knowledge institutions.

The TIP, on the other hand, aims to strengthen the technological innovation capabilities of SMEs to enable them to become more competitive. Companies can draw on the TIP to defray the cost of seconding experts who can assist in identifying critical technologies and build in-house R&D capabilities relevant to the company's operations. Alternatively, companies embarking on technology projects, such as developing and improving products, processes and business models, can receive funding to defray quality

development costs. Eligible companies will receive funding support of up to 50% of qualifying costs. At present, Singapore is still highly reliant on imported supplies, and this handicap may force it to place more emphasis on product testing in the future.

Singapore is heavily dependent on imported raw food materials due to its lack of arable land. Since meat/poultry and their by-products are considered high-risk from a Halal perspective, exports of these products into many Muslim countries within Southeast Asia and the Middle East must be accompanied with valid Halal certification. The drawback is that Halal certification is only optional in Singapore.

In view of Singapore's heavy dependence on imported supplies and the absence of an internationally accepted testing standard for verification of Halal products, MUIS sees the need for more product testing to ascertain the Halal status of imports. MUIS has plans to further collaborate with Spring Singapore, IE Singapore, and other partners to build up Singapore's Halal brand through product development, trade and consultancy. As explained by Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim (Minister for Information, Communications, and the Arts and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs), 'With global competition and increased consumer expectations, there is a need to extend Singapore's Halal value chain beyond certification. Product development, testing, consultancy, as well as trade and promotion are but some aspects in enhancing the integrity of Singapore's Halal brand and adding value to locally made products as they move through the supply chain.'

xiii. Regulating Halal through Audit and Enforcement

Regulation on Halal is governed through the Administration of Muslim Law Act (AMLA), which entrusted MUIS with the sole legal powers to issue Halal certificates in Singapore. The act protects the certification against any activities to mislead or confuse consumers with Halal products. Adoption to HalMQ by companies/ premises was made compulsory from 1 January 2010.

Despite that adoption of Halal by companies is voluntary, MUIS requires any establishment to undergo certification for all their outlets to prevent customer confusion

on the Halal status of that establishment. This particularly applies to a franchise-based eating outlet.

xiv. Exploiting Halal Economic Potentials

Singapore is a trading nation that imports almost 90% of its food requirements due to limited arable land to undertake farming and fishing activities. From an economic standpoint, they are among the key nations in Southeast Asia that actively participate in the global food chain system due to its strategic location, efficient delivery system and a well-supported physical infrastructure.

Singapore is strategically using its diverse food culture and its reputation as a trading hub to position itself in the growing global Halal industry. Even though the small city-state lacks arable land compared to most other countries, its food production is expanding. For example, in 2017, as reported in *Business Times Online*[240] (25 September 2018) the food manufacturing industry contributed SGD 4.3 billion to Singapore's GDP, and employed over 48,000 workers. Local food exports make up more than 50% of the industry's manufacturing sales. Their food imports such as eggs, chicken and fruit came mainly from Malaysia, Brazil and Australia. These countries have been known as among the key Halal food-producing countries. In addition, Singapore has attracted many multinational food companies that produce family-favorite brands to have their base for Asia-Pacific headquarters and research centers in Singapore. Arguably, the success is due to a number of enablers including favorable innovation climate, strategic location in Asia, strong talent base and research and development capabilities. Their Food Innovation Cluster provides food companies big and small with an ideal platform to develop and test novel technologies and products. Halal food has been identified as the market with one of the biggest growth potentials in Singapore that could accelerate the current local food export achievement (currently standing at 50% of the industry's manufacturing sales). As

[240] Kovac, Mathew and Nah, Kee Ai "How Singapore's food industry is shaking things up" Business Times online https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/opinion/how-singapores-food-industry-is-shaking-things-up.

reported in *The Business Times*, 70% of the country's exports are already Halal-certified.[241]

In addition, as aptly stated by Loh Soi Min, the Deputy Director of Lifestyle Division at Standard Productivity and Innovation Board (SPRING), 'Singapore's diverse food culture, backed by our strong reputation for food safety and quality standards, puts our local food companies in good stead to meet the changing consumption patterns of the Muslim population.' He added that 'Companies can look at building their concepts and brands here in Singapore and then using Singapore as a launchpad into Asia and other parts of the world'. [242]

Conclusion

This section discusses the connotation of Halal food and the globally recognised certification system developed by Singapore and Malaysia. Halal is associated with food that complies with Islamic requirements, hence the accompanying certification system serves to validate the 'Halalness' through assessment of the food-producing chain; from the preparation, ingredients used, slaughtering, processing, cleaning, handling, storing, packaging right down to transporting and retailing. However, the adoption of Halal requirements varies between countries due to different interpretations and understanding about what constitutes Halal and haram. S. Romi Mukherjee acknowledges that Halal is 'mobile and mutating political, social and corporal borders'.[243] Fatema Mernissi (as cited by S. Romi Mukherjee) argues that the core of Islam is found in its obsession with borders, walls, and boundaries. All these are to avoid 'mixity', no-differentiation, liquid life, anomie and unbridled flows.[244] In a certain part of the world, the border is provided by an individual or a group or an Islamic scholar, but in the case of Malaysia and Singapore, it is through a state-backed religious body.

[241] S'pore companies well-placed to tap China's halal market. https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/consumer/spore-companies-well-placed-to-tap-chinas-halal-market
[242] See *"Bitting into the global F&B Market"*, By Francis Chan, Jonathan Kwok, and Dhevarajan Devadas the Straits Times 16 Nov 2010.
[243] S Romi Mukherjee 'Global Halal: Meat, Money, and Religion' *Religions* 2014, *5*(1): 75
[244] *Ibid*

In my view, knowledge of Halal requirements in both states is well documented by relevant authorities with a clearly established set of standards, procedures and guidelines. This supports Varadaraja V. Raman's arguments that regulations have the cultural effect of giving practitioners (in this case Malay Muslims) a feeling of belonging to a group.[245] The certification system integrates Islamic guidelines with the accepted cultural practices reflecting the growing sensibilities of ever-demanding Muslim consumers. This certification and the accompanying Halal logo are paramount, especially to a company venturing into ever-demanding Muslim markets. However, there is bound to be continuous contestation and debate surrounding the certification system. The mixture of economics and a religious concept is sometimes challenging to harmonise, therein lies the importance of having in place sound governance and institutional structures. It is also important to ensure that Halal integrity is not compromised for quick economic gain and that the issue of Halal is not taken lightly.

The most significant portion of this section centres on mainstreaming of Halal industry – the evolution of Halal from being a sensitive domestic Malay consumption issue to becoming of commercial, political and national strategic importance. I have shown that state's deliberate intervention in shaping the Malay Muslim consumption is apparent: from establishing Acts and policies governing the Halal industry to setting up core institutions that jealously guard the dominance of Halal certification as well as empowering a string of supporting institutions to work tirelessly in nurturing the growth of Halal certified companies, to continue striving towards enhancing the industry standards. The various forms of intervention strongly reflect Malaysia's seriousness in pushing Halal development forward to fulfil their motivation and objectives.

In Malaysia, a narrative is being continuously communicated to justify the continuation of Halal industry development, i.e. achieving Global Halal Hub and Halal as the new source of economic growth (in the 11th Malaysia Plan policy document) that ideologically helps to contribute to the overall socio-economic well-being of Malaysians. The

[245] Varadaraja V. Raman Food, "Its many aspects in science, religion and culture" *Food Today,* Vo.49 No 4 (December 2014): pg.968

achievement is important to reflect the success of UMNO's Islamisation initiative. The certification system empowers the state to have control and normalise not just the multinational corporations, but also the processed or imported products by getting them to comply with the stipulated standards and requirements. Successful delivery of state programs and projects translate to wealth creation for Halal companies through higher revenues and greater market share. After all, it appears that the Halal development initiative has been and still is instrumental and strategic to the modern working of the social and political landscape of Malaysia.

Halal in the secular-state of Singapore is embroiled in a tussle between promoting the state as a global hub for Halal due to its potential for national economic development, and championing the interest and needs of its minority Malay Muslim consumers at the back of its majority Chinese cultural setting. Zainul Rasheed, Former Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs describes this model:[246]

> Singapore's 'unique' model of secularism should be referred to as 'secularism with a soul'. While religion must not mix with politics to undermine public order or incite subversion, clearly religion and public policy do engage as a matter of principle and accepted practice in this republic.

Singapore offers an interesting model of a secular state, as there is no clear demarcation between religion and state based on state involvement in the affairs of not just Islam, but also in managing other religions. This often creates tension between the community and the authority as argued by Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman 'the obscure nature of secularism in Singapore has led to tensions on several issues between the government and Muslim community due to differing perceptions of what Singaporean secularism means'.[247] He goes on elaborating that mutual dependence between religion and the secular demands religion to be constituted in favour of the power structure supporting the secular. Nonetheless, Johan Fisher argues Halal is essentially an Islamic injunction, and

[246] See Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman 'The Secular and the Religious in the Management of Islam in Singapore' *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 2018 :246.*
[247] *Ibid* 247.

not socially neutral in nature.[248] He elaborates that in Singapore, the moral implications of Halal are downplayed due to conflict with their majority Chinese social, religious and economic rituals. As a matter of fact, state obsession on the global Halal market started in the late 1990s after legislation passed to empower the MUIS foray into regulation and promotion of Halal business.

[248] Johan Fischer 'Looking for religious logos in Singapore' Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion *Routledge* 2018:5.

CHAPTER 4: NAVIGATING HALAL – CONSUMERISM AND CORPORATION

This chapter reviews the market and demand-side of Halal and reveals the ways in which corporations and businesses manage their production and operations in order to fulfill Halal requirements. It also shows their willingness to invest in the necessary infrastructure while competing to gain the trust of consumers, particularly the Malay Muslims, and also increase their market share. Findings in this chapter are crucial in affirming hypothesis **H2**, as presented in the thesis Introduction, and will expand our understanding of what Johan Fischer refers to as 'Halal Zone', an area where regulatory institutions and global markets interact. This area signifies 'not only national contexts for Halal production, trade and regulation, but also zones within and between nations: major Halal network events, Halal training, science and research, how Muslim activists in Malaysia, in particular, try to expand Halal requirements to cover more and more products and processes, and how local and multinational manufacturing companies, shops and restaurants try to live up to rising Halal requirements.'[249] The discussion in this chapter focuses on the production companies and their consumers.

Defining a Halal market

Arguably, there is no such thing as a typical Halal market. The world's 1.8 billion Muslim consumers and the market they represent are very much fragmented. Muslims reside in many different countries that are in many different stages of economic development as well as having varying social and cultural backgrounds. Given this variety, the level of importance of Halal products for each country is different and therefore far from homogenous. The needs, aspirations and value systems of each of these regions are distinct. For instance, Malay Muslims in Malaysia and in South Africa (Cape Malays) speak different languages, wear a different style of attire and eat different types of food. In contrast to the relatively high-income levels of certain Muslim countries (e.g. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries), the majority of global Muslim populations reside

[249] Johan Fischer, 'Islam, Standards, and Technoscience in Global Halal Zones', Routledge, 9.

in low per capita income countries (e.g. Sub-Saharan Africa) or in emerging economies (e.g. Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia).

Notwithstanding these differences, a number of global market and industry reports suggest that Muslim markets are becoming more integrated into the global economy as consumers, employees, manufacturers, retailers and traders. This integration seems to be attributed to the growing inclination of Muslims to view themselves as one global Islamic community (or *Ummah* in Arabic), a community without borders with diverse backgrounds, locations, and nationalities. Many of them, either as individuals or communities, feel the importance of unity and togetherness, especially in their efforts to dispel some of the propaganda and negative stereotypes portraying them as civilisation threats and menaces. As consumers, even when they lean toward modern and western-style products and lifestyles, many of them, it can be argued, persist in making choices that reflect this negative Muslim identity and support their *Ummah.*

The call for a boycott of McDonald's outlets across Malaysia and Singapore in 2014, spread by a number of non-governmental organisations and social media, was probably to demonstrate Muslim solidarity with Israeli-Palestinians during a conflict (involving Muslim *Ummah*). It was reported the company lost 80% of its revenue from its operations in Malaysia and Singapore on that day plus some material losses due to acts of vandalism.[250] Not all Muslims, however, supported that call for a boycott because, just as in any other religion, not all Muslims have a similar and strict observation of their religion, particularly in environments that constrain them from practicing fully the requirements. For example, in Malaysia and Singapore, dietary laws among Muslim consumers are practiced and, to avoid contamination, retailers are prohibited from shelving Halal and non-Halal products in the same place.[251] However, in a non-Muslim environment, such as in Hobart, Tasmania Australia, this would be difficult to achieve in

[250] See Ezlika M. Ghazali et al (eds) "Was the Boycott of McDonald's Malaysia Religiously Motivated?" Management of *Syariah* Compliant Business, 158.
[251] In Singapore, MUIS stated that all "Halal" products that are stored, displayed, sold or served should be categorised and should be labelled as "Halal" or lawful at every stage of the process so as to prevent it from being mixed or contaminated with things that are impure or non-halal. In Malaysia, JAKIM stated that no mixing between raw materials/ products with non-halal materials/ sources or those with uncertain halal status.

practice.[252] Usually, Muslims living in such an environment will be consciously on the lookout for products and services associated with the Islamic brand or aligned to Islamic principles, such as sustainability and ethical branding.

Islam and Malay identity are usually co-existing; a Malay is born into a religion and the cultural practices of Malay society are adopted instantantly.[253] Their ethnic identity is 'deemed coterminous' with Muslim identity[254] which is 'treated as an integral part of Malay identity'[255] shaping their daily lives, intra as well as interpersonal relationships. Simply put, Islam becomes part of their culture to a degree that religious practices become synonymous with cultural norms.[256] Generally, when it comes to food consumption, the Malays tend to choose and prepare their food in a way that reflects their strong sense of Muslim identity. This includes those who prepare the food, whether they are observant and practising Muslim or otherwise. This is contrary to other ethnicity settings, such as the Chinese, as they may demonstrate different cultures depending on whether one is Taoist, Buddhist or Christian.[257] Taoism and Buddhism, for example, practice honouring the ancestral traditions that link to China or India or other Asian regions, whereas those who subscribe to Christianity are unlikely to practice any traditional ancestral rites. Notwithstanding cultural differences, in stark contrast to their

[252] But I must note that as any direct or indirect contact between Halal and non-Halal through the use of same knives or chopping board will cause Halal meat as Haram.
[253] As cited by R.B. H. Goh that 2000 census from Department of Statistics Singapore revealed '...a strong correlation among ethnicity, home language and …religion among the Malays", where "almost all Malays-speaking residents were Muslims. He goes on arguing that while Malays probably less markedly heterogeneous they combine together people of Bugis, Minangkabau, Boyanese, Arab, early settlers of Orang Laut and archipelago Malay descent. According to Goh, Singapore's Constitution pertaining to Malay and Islam is according under Article 152 declares – 'The Government shall exercise its functions in such manner as to recognize the special position of the Malays, who are the indigenous people of Singapore, and accordingly it shall be the responsibility of the Government to protect, safeguard, support, foster and promote their political, educational, religious, economic, social and cultural interests and the Malay'.
[254] See Eugene K. B. Tan Keeping God in Place: The Management of Religion in Singapore, 60.
[255] *Ibid.*
[256] There is variation in how Malay practices Islam in Malaysia and Singapore as it is integrated into customary law known as *Adat*. Penny Van Esterik in his book *Food Culture in Southeast Asia* argues that Southeast Asian Muslims have generally been more concerned with rituals than doctrinal Islam; however, that situation is rapidly changing in the face of recent Islamic reforms.
[257] R.B.H. Goh suggest that Chinese Singaporean covers people with varying cultural, economic and linguistic background; localised descendent of early settlers from Nanyang, Asian-American and Anglophone professionals, Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong business elites, Mandarin-speaking from PRC and others.

Malay counterparts, religion appears slightly less dominant to the ethnic Chinese citizens of Malaysia and, particularly, of Singapore.[258] Therefore, the Halal market, especially against the backdrop of multicultural Malaysia and Singapore, is in many ways nebulous. Jonathan A.J. Wilson and Jonathan Liu, in their attempt to shape Halal into a brand, argue that the Halal market is based on a trust or belief that is integral to the daily lives of Muslims. In my view, identification and pursuit of target markets in the two states is contingent upon acceptance of that identity by the Malay populace and is context-specific. Further, as held by Allam Ahmed, trust that is communicated through cultural and long-term human interactions is of greatest importance to Muslim consumers.[259] In the following sections, I first discuss this consumerism in Malaysia and the ways in which corporations there navigate any changes in consumption dynamics arising from growing consumer awareness and sophistication. I then look at the ways in which these practices manifest in the culturally diverse market of Singapore.

Islamic Consumerism in Malaysia

In the previous subsection of a literature review, I suggested that consumer preference and practices among Malay Muslims are a reflection of their increasing religiousity and the growing purchasing power, particularly among their middle-class segment. There seems to be a general consensus among scholars that New Economic Policy (NEP) and Islamisation were the key turning points to the socio-economic development of the Malays – particularly in transforming the mainly rural-based agrarian culture to a middle-class urban mainstream. Although NEP (implemented in 1971–1990) ended some time ago, Islamisation, according to Prime Minister Mahathir, is yet to be redefined[260] despite

[258] Tong Chee Kiong, "Religious Trends and Issues in Singapore," in *Religious Diversity in Singapore,* ed., Lai Ah Heng (ISEAS,2008), 31.

[259] A study conducted by Ahmed (2008) as cited by Jonathan A.J. Wilson and Jonathan Liu, "Shaping the Halal into a brand?" Journal of Islamic Marketing Vol. 1 No. 2 2010: 112-113 on marketing Halal meat in the UK finds that all respondents selected, stated that the authenticity of the meat being Halal was the most important factor. His study concludes that Muslim consumers still prefer their local butchers even though supermarkets stocking Halal lines are more capable of providing authentic information than some local butchers. He goes on stating that most of Muslim respondents did not ask their local Halal butchers where the meat came from.

[260] In his first blog posting after leading the new *Pakatan Harapan* government won the GE14, Prime Minister Mahathir said that his government will give emphasis on Islamic teachings according to the *Al Quran* and true hadith. In supporting this, Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik said understanding and

the fact that the impact of both policies is felt and clearly visible still. Johan Fischer posits that the NEP has 'unquestionably actively drawn Islam into the economic sphere through the proliferation of a multitude of Islamic institutions starting in the 1980s'.[261] A.B. Shamsul suggests that the NEP transformed Malay dominance into Malay hegemony within the notion of a plural society so that Malay culture became synonymous with 'national culture'.[262] The emergence of new middle-class, urban-based Malays and entrepreneurs has contributed to better social standing – they are now educated, well connected and modern consumers. The socio-economic achievements of the Malays have, on the one hand, helped to fulfill the strategic objectives intended by the policy. But on the other hand, they have also resulted in a generation who are less competitive and heavily dependent on government, in particular, UMNO for continuous support. James Chin laments that NEP has created a class of Malay rent-seekers whose only role is to add 20% to 50% to the cost of projects. He elaborates that a 20% cut goes into the pockets of politically connected cronies for doing nothing and goes on to argue that it would be politically suicidal if current Prime Minister Mahathir resolved the policy immediately. Instead, Chin suggests that Mahathir realign NEP back to the original intent.[263]

Notwithstanding that the official period for NEP ended in 1990, its principle and underlying aspiration remained in subsequent national policy, namely, the National Development Policy (1991–2000), National Vision Policy (2001–2010), New Economic Model (2010) and the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016–2020). The outcomes, of course, as with any government policies, contain both positive points that have contributed constructively to the country as well as negative points that yield some bad results. To

interpreting the Islamic teaching without taking into consideration elements of m*aqasid* (objective), *fiqah* (jurisprudence), civilizational dimensions and universal values, could lead to misunderstanding

[261] Johan Fischer, 'Islamic mobility: Car culture in modern Malaysia, Journal of Consumer Culture 2016 Vol 16 (2), 575.

[262] A.B. Shamsul, "Bureaucratic management of identity in a modern state: 'Malayness' in postwar Malaysia" in *Making majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey and the United States*, ed. Dru C. Gladney (Stanford University Press, Stanford, California (1998), 146.

[263] James Chin 'The man to fix Malaysia: Only Mahathir can reverse the country's most destructive policy' at https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-05-13/mahathir-mohamad-can-fix-malaysia-s-most-destructive-policy 14 May 2018.

keep this thesis within scope, my discussion is confined to the direct and indirect impact of these policies in shaping consumerism among the Malays.

A.B. Shamsul suggests that the above pro-Malay affirmative action policies have created a rapid expansion, not just 'Malay middle class', but 'Malay new rich'.[264] He contends that the two are not homogenous internally and can be broken down into two: the 'old' manually oriented middle class comprised of small business people and self-employed (mostly rural-based), and the 'new', knowledgeable middle-class professionals and bureaucrats (generally urban-based and beneficiaries of education-related NEP). Whilst the first category survived mainly through political patronage and money politics (that perpetuates the culture of dependency to political masters), the second category is equipped with academic credentials and mostly inclined towards Islamic resurgence (or *dakwah*).

The above indicates that consumerism among the Malays signifies their expression of allegiance towards the state and is a signifier of social status with a certain degree of Islamic influence. This appears to agree with Lejla Voloder who sees national economic stability and security tied to economic growth, where citizens are encouraged to practice consumption in order to demonstrate their civic belonging.[265] Lejla quoted an example of the relationship between 'good' citizenry practice and consumption during the 'global financial crisis' (2008–2010) during which citizens in Australia, the UK, and the USA were encouraged by their governments to shop 'in order to rescue both the economy and society'. He noted that in 2009 the Australian government provided cash payments to tax-paying citizens as a way of promoting consumption; thus, it was considered a duty of the citizens to consume.

In his ethnographic study on consumption among middle-class Malay Muslims, *Proper Islam Consumption: Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia*, Johan Fischer

[264] A.B. Shamsul. "The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism – The socio-historical roots of the NEP and its contemporary implications" *The Developing Economies* XXXV-3 Sept 1997, 256.
[265] Lejla Voloder, "The "Mainstreaming" of Halal: Muslim Consumer-citizenship in Australia", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs,* 2015: 234.

reveals the outcome of his fieldwork covering 241 households in suburban Taman Tun Dr. Ismail (located 15 km outside Kuala Lumpur). Fischer highlights two distinct Islamic consumption patterns among his respondents; one group observes proper Islamic consumption as a localised form of purism, while the other group is more pragmatic in their approach. Fischer argues that the purist Halal sensibility necessitates that Halal products are to be produced only by Muslims, and the Halal production is kept strictly separate from the non-Halal. To the purists, Halal consumption is a morally given. The pragmatists, however, would either reject the imposition of Halalisation or simply reject it as a *material* and thus a *shallow* display of belief.[266] The purist and pragmatic dichotomy arose out of the attempt to ascertain behaviour and preference in Malays' middle-class consumerism, as a reflection of their own religious profile and practice. Fischer holds that the state steered Halal certification as a conduit to nationalise Islam, while also working towards delivering economic growth and spending power to the middle-class Malays in return for patriotic consumption.

The middle-class Malay, to my view, is generally open to culinary assimilation of foods that were once seen as exclusive to a particular ethnicity. There are instances where food often associated with the Chinese, such as *Dim Sum* (steamed minced meat wrapped in pastry skin, shown as Figure 4-1)[267] was well received by Malay patrons, partly due to the credibility of the food provider. Another trend is the increased popularity of the Kopitiam (Hokkien for 'coffeeshop') with the Malays, despite the place being known for its 'Chinese featuring' outlet.[268] Eating outlets such as Madam Kwan (where poultry is sourced from Halal-certified suppliers but the outlet has no Halal certification because they serve alcohol), Old Town White Coffee (largest Halal-certified Kopitiam café chain in Perak State), PappaRich (certified Halal including their overseas outlets such as in Melbourne, Australia) are among those that appeal to young executives looking for a conducive meeting place that costs less than Coffee Bean or Starbucks. As for the 'older

[266] Fischer, "Proper Islam Consumption: Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia", 76.
[267] *Dim Sum* is a Cantonese style of steamed dumpling prepared in small, almost bite-sized portions. A traditional *dim sum* brunch includes various types of steamed buns such as *cha siu bao* (a steamed bun filled with barbecue pork), rice or wheat dumplings and rice noodle rolls, which contain a range of ingredients, including beef, chicken, pork, prawns, and vegetarian options.
[268] Historically Kopitiam was mostly owned and run by Foochow and Hainanese migrants who settled in towns and urban centres during the British Colonial days.

version or traditional' Kopitiam that appeals to Muslims, it is not just about Halal but their Malay-friendly image that matters.[269] These examples demonstrate that Malays are open to different culinary experiences without worrying whether that it is less Malay or Muslim. After all, it is all about trust.

Figure 4-1: Halal *Dim Sum* as advertised in a Hotel in Shah Alam, Malaysia

With the Malay population currently standing at about 62% of the total 32 million Malaysian population, a major growth opportunity exists for business to participate in Halal products and services.

[269] See The Star Newspaper dated 17 Nov 2012 'Kopitiam that caters to Muslim' https://www.thestar.com.my/Lifestyle/Food/Eating-Out/2012/11/17/Kopitiam-that-caters-to-Muslims. In this article, Wong Kok Peng Kopitiam located in Kedah manage to attract people from all races. To make it appeal to Muslim, all foods served are Halal. To show respect to their Muslim customers, they even close during the fasting month of Ramadhan.

i. Growing awareness, creating demand

The impetus towards commercialisation of Halal started during the leadership of Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi (2003–2009) and his vision of making Malaysia the global Halal hub. Soon after taking over the premiership, Abdullah launched Malaysia's foray into the global Halal market via the Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS) that was held on 16 August 2004. Touted as the world's largest Halal trade exhibition, the event brought together for the first time buyers and suppliers of Halal-certified products from around the world and demonstrated the reality of a global Halal market. During his opening speech, Abdullah commended Malaysia's milestone progress:

> Malaysia is not wasting its advantage as a successful developing Muslim country. It will, insya-Allah be moving beyond becoming a Halal food hub[..] today we will mark the unveiling of a new standard for Malaysia – A Muslim standard for the world. … SIRIM has completed the MS1500:2004 standards … already the longest established and most widely recognized registered Halal logo in the world.[270]

Arguably, the term 'global Halal market' started when Malaysia published its first official Halal standard, MS1500:2004.[271] Thereafter the meaning of Islam has become increasingly contested and, as stated by Johan Fischer, whilst Malaysia started to promote Halal as a logo, brand or model of the state that is now ready for export, it has also forged a new class of Malay entrepreneurs, the New Malays, who consciously use their network as a strategic metaphor to build, maintain and expand state and commercial ties.[272] Fischer argues that the New Malay embodies an aggressive, entrepreneurial and global 'we can' mentality. HDC spokesperson Syaifulzafni Aziz, at an international forum in Beijing, emphasised the strategic importance of the China-Malaysia collaboration in ensuring consistency in the global Halal products supply of both quantity and quality.[273]

[270] http://www.pmo.gov.my/ucapan/?m=p&p=paklah&id=2880.
[271] Based on the publication by International Trade Centre entitled Halal Goes Global 2015.
[272] Johan Fischer, "Proper Islamic Consumption: Shopping among the Malays in Modern Malaysia". *NIAS Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series*, No. 113 (2008):12.
[273] See The Star Online China, Malaysia urged to develop Halal industry 15 July 2015 https://www.thestar.com.my/business/business-news/2015/07/15/china-malaysia-urged-to-develop-halal-industry.

This is seen as a prelude by the state to internationalise the Halal economic agenda as it realises that with only experience, expertise and technology in Halal, Malaysia is still lacking the much-needed supply of agricultural produce to enable it to become the Halal Hub for the world. China, on the other hand, has been producing 22% of the global food supply and 35% of their labour is in agriculture.

MIHAS featured a range of Halal product demonstrations and samples in various economic enterprises covering traditional sectors, such as food, and non-traditional sectors, including Islamic insurance (*takaful*), travel, publishing, information technology and multimedia. It also featured an International Islamic fashion show, reflecting Abdullah's opening remarks that Malaysia attempt to demonstrate its edge in exploring fresh and bold new areas for the Muslim *Ummah*. Notably, a lot of effort went into ensuring a successful event, including a major promotional campaign reaching Beijing, Zhengzhou, Dubai, London, Cologne, Paris, Lahore, Bandung, Jakarta, Rotterdam, Brussels, Bangkok and Manila. The campaign included a plea by Abdullah for all stakeholders to work closely with his committed government in ensuring the success of this global hub vision. At the recently concluded MIHAS 2019 on 3 April 2019, the exhibition generated sales worth RM988 million, while the International sourcing program garnered RM616 million sales, with the majority generated by Malaysian companies. There were 1,000 exhibitors from 44 countries, including new participants from Bosnia, Kuwait, Kazakhstan and Portugal.[274]

On a smaller scale, the Halal Fiesta Malaysia (popularly known as Halfest) carnival provides an avenue for manufacturers and service providers from the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) category to showcase and reach out directly to their end buyers. The event started in 2011 as a platform to nurture the growth and development of SMEs thereby enabling them to penetrate global markets. Throughout the years, Halfest activities have been successful in attracting larger participating SMEs and the general public. In 2018, the event expanded its footprint outside Malaysia through the Halfest

[274] BERNAMA *MIHAS 2019 Generates RM1.6 billion in sales*
https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/mihas-2019-generates-rm16-bil-sales.

Tokyo event. Both MIHAS and Halfest have reinforced Malaysia's leadership position in Halal.

But doing Halal business in Malaysia is not without any political interference. In 2006, Malaysia hosted the World Halal Forum (WHF) as a platform for business and industry leaders, policymakers and academia to gather together and discuss Halal trade and business matters. The organiser KasehDia Sdn Bhd appointed a 28-year-old Khairy Jamaluddin (the son-in-law of Prime Minister Abdullah) as a Chairman of WHF. Khairy, at that point, was UMNO Deputy Youth Chief and, according to Steven Gan, was Malaysia's most powerful 28-year-old man.[275] His meteoric rise in UMNO was said to be due to his relationship with Abdullah, indicating that nepotism and family ties matter in UMNO. As suggested by James Chin, in Asia it is believed that 'political power can be passed on to the next generation through bloodline'.[276] (Interestingly, in 2009 Khairy emerged as UMNO Youth Chief after a three-cornered fight with Mohd Khir Toyo and Mukhriz Mahathir, son of Mahathir Mohamad.)

ii. Halal adoption by companies

'We use consumer power', said JAKIM's Halal Hub Director Dr. Sirajuddin Suhaimee at a press conference in Putrajaya on 25 March 2019.[277] He added that even though Halal certification is voluntary, companies are willing to take advantage of the increased awareness among consumers in Malaysia. Nevertheless, there were instances where businesses, being overzealous to prove their Halal compliance, tried to capitalise on the burgeoning Halal demand by excessively certifying as many products as they could, some even exploiting pious Muslims who fear touching or eating items deemed unclean or non-Halal.

[275] See https://www.malaysiakini.com/editorials/28588.
[276] See https://www.reuters.com/article/us-malaysia-dynasty/family-ties-take-root-in-malaysian-politics-idUSTRE4A302V20081104.
[277] See https://halal-welt.com/en/jakim-we-use-the-consumer-power/.

Source: *The Borneo Post* 30 January 2019

Figure 4-2: Raid conducted by authorities in Sabah, Malaysia

As reported in *The Borneo Post*, 30 January 2019, 26 food outlets (out of 34 premises inspected) were issued with warning notices by the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs for falsely claiming their food was Halal. The warnings were issued during integrated operations on compliance for Halal Descriptions under the Trade Description Act 2011. The joint operations involved 18 personnel from three offices: Sarawak Islamic Affairs Department (JAIS), Sibu Divisional Health Office (DHO) and Sibu Municipal Council (SMC). Out of 26 food outlets, only four are still in the process of complying and 22 had removed the display of description as instructed.

Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin, a popular Muslim Mufti (cleric) of the northern state of Perlis, raised his concern that people were practicing religion beyond the nature of Islam itself; that, to a certain extent, it was going overboard.

In regard to Halal certification issuance, JAKIM, as at January 2018, issued 7,426 Halal certifications to companies comprising 78,232 food and beverages products, 2,129 cosmetic and personal care products, 1,418 pharmaceuticals and 2,808 consumer goods. A total of 242 slaughterhouses were certified Halal nationwide.

The Star, published on 17 March 2013, quoted JAKIM's Halal Hub Division Head Hakimah Mohd Yusoff as saying 'We have received applications to certify products that do not need it – from eggs and vegetables to furniture'. Another incident that caused a furor on social media was a hotel in Petaling Jaya designating a 'Halal lift' for delivery of Halal products to their restaurants while non-Halal products were carried up the stairs.[278] Arguably, businesses are commercialising religion and Halal by promoting what Muslims should use and consume.[279] The three examples below of businesses with some sort of Halal 'gimmick' reflect that this gimmickry is perhaps only a fleeting trend:

> 1) In 2015 Malaysia hosted 'Halal Speed Dating' events, assumed to be the largest '*Syariah*-compliant' speed dating events where 144 participants lined up to search for their love matches. The co-founder of Halal Speed Dating (the event organiser) said that registrations were open to all and not limited to Malaysians. Once approved, applicants would be given details of the event. Aiman Maulana said that unlike conventional speed dating, the women would be accompanied by chaperones, also known as the *wali*. The *wali* is typically the father of the woman but can also be the brother, grandfather or a judge if the father has passed away. The reasons the *wali* was needed were first, to avoid having the speed dating interaction be a topic of gossip for the public (*fitnah*); second, to protect the woman from potential harm that comes with meeting strangers; third to allow the wali to investigate prospects in order to choose the best for the bride; and fourth, to avoid social ills such as premarital sex. This made Halal Speed Dating *Syariah*-compliant.[280]

[278] See https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2013/03/17/new-guidelines-on-halal-certification/
[279] Arlina Arshad and Trinna Leong, Rising trend of Halal labelling generates concern The Straits Times 14 June 2016 https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/rising-trend-of-halal-labelling-generates-concern
[280] Aiman Maulana *Halal Speed dating is Real, Here's What You Need to Know About It* https://vulcanpost.com/384881/ halal-speed-dating-malaysia/

Figure 4-3: Among Halal 'gimmicks' in the Malaysian market

2) In January 2014, a team of scientists from the research institution, University Technology Malaysia, was engaged by a private corporation to develop Halal cat food. H.M.S Amir et al. argue that Halal cat food was needed because it comes into human contact during feeding, handling, and dishwasher use. They go on to suggest that on many occasions cat food would be kept together with human food storage facilities, such as in the refrigerator, and hence may contaminate human food if it the cat food is not Halal.[281] Financial aid on the project was said to be have been made available by the University and the government.

3) Halal lubricant, branded under Halalube, was developed by a fully-owned Malaysian private corporation, Sumber Petroleum Cemerlang. The brand covers a comprehensive range of specialty products from compressor and vacuum pump oils, gear oils and hydraulic fluids to greases. According to the company website, Halalube products would cover food and beverage-related economic sectors, edible oil and pharmaceuticals, and personal care. A quick check reveals that the company obtained Halal certification from a certification body based in the Netherlands.

While the ethical inferences these examples raise are for state authorities to deal with, they do raise a wider argument on how real the purportedly lucrative global Halal market is to the businesses. Neither of Malaysia's Halal e-commerce

[281] Amir H.M.S, Razauden Z., Harisun Y., Ida I.M, Mona Z. Halal Cat Food for the Whole Market, International Journal on Advanced Science Engineering Information Technology Vol 4 (2014) No 4

marketplace providers, Zilzar and AladdinStreet, have been doing well.[282] This is despite the fact that, as Nogoev et. al. claim, each year the number of e-commerce deals grows exceptionally. Zilzar, launched in Dubai in October 2014, had to halt its operations pending cash investment from potential investors.[283] Whereas AladdinStreet, which began its business during MIHAS in April 2017, took a bolder approach. Despite an ambitious plan to penetrate into 30 countries in 18 months and extravagant marketing expenses including a five-year exclusive global partnership with Manchester United (English Football Club), AladdinStreet now operates only in five countries.

Another example of over-ambition was Malaysia's first *Syariah*-compliant airline, Rayani Air, launched in December 2015 with overwhelming responses from Malaysian consumers after some religious groups had begun criticising the secular model of Malaysia Airlines.[284] Unfortunately, their business was terminated after only four months in operation when Malaysia's Department of Civil Aviation revoked their Air Operator Certificate due to issues of administration and safety audits, as reported by BBC News on 14 June 2016.[285] It was also claimed that the failure was due to the airline's business model.

Another form of Halal commercialisation is described in what Jonathan A.J. Wilson and Jonathan Liu term as 'quasi co-brand'.[286] For example, Halal Parks, where all activities within a stipulated park are to be *Syariah*-related activities. Halal Development Corporation (HDC) defines a Halal Park as:

[282] Samantha Cheh Malaysia's B2B Halal e-commerce platforms DagangHalal, Zilzar and AladdinStreet: Where are they now? 6 Aug 2018 https://www.salaamgateway.com/en/story/malaysias_b2b_halal_ecommerce_platforms_daganghalal_zilzar_aladdinstreet_where_are_they_now-SALAAM06082018101956/
[283] Nogoev et. Al., "The Evolution and Development of E-Commerce Market and E-Cash", (2005):3
[284] Martin Rivers, How it all went wrong for Malaysia's 'Halal' Airlines http://english.alarabiya.net/en/business /aviation-and-transport/2016/04/15/How-it-all-went-wrong-for-Malaysia-s-halal-airline-.html. Rayani Air was named after their non-Muslim duo co-founders Ravi Alagendrran and Karthiyani Govindran)
[285] "Malaysia's Islamic airline Rayani Air barred from flying", *BBC News*, 14 June 2016 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36524396.
[286] Jonathan A.J. Wilson and Jonathan Liu Shaping the Halal into a brand? Journal of Islamic Marketing Vol2 No1 2010 pg-111.

> a community of manufacturing and service businesses located on common property with the aim of preserving the integrity of Halal products. Components of this approach include the green design of park infrastructure, cleaner production, pollution prevention, availability and accessibility of raw materials and ingredients, energy efficiency, intercompany linkages, consolidated services from public agencies and linkages for marketing. In essence, it is a centre of infrastructure excellence and has been regarded as one of the building blocks of the Halal industry. Tenants within the Halal parks form a community of manufacturing and services businesses with a mutual goal of achieving economic benefits while preserving Halal integrity.[287]

To entice businesses to operate from Halal Parks, the park owner (either a federal agency, a state agency, economic corridor authorities or private companies) will apply for HALMAS status from HDC in order to gain tax incentives and benefits. The establishment of a HALMAS status by HDC was an attempt to standardise Halal Parks and limit their use to only Halal-related activities. Malaysia has 24 Halal Parks of which 14 are endorsed as HALMAS status.[288]

It should be noted that each Halal park presents different advantages in terms of geographical location. For example, Halal parks located at Malaysia's international logistics gateways – large seaports (i.e. PKFZ, Selangor Halal Hub, Penang International Halal Hub, and Johor Halal Park) and KLIA (Techpark@enstek) – have an export focus. These parks are called 'international Halal parks', or 'international Halal economic zones', and they are the preferred locations for export-driven Halal production and trade because logistics are simplified. However, other parks are located far away from international gateways and, as such, have a more domestic, or upstream function. For example, Tanjung Manis Halal Park provides space for agriculture production, as it has vast amounts of land. This is impossible to locate next to an international logistics gateway, as the land would be too costly. However, this land is ideal for the upstream production of high-value ingredients and food/cosmetics products (with a long shelf life).

[287] http://www.hdcglobal.com/publisher/halal_park_what_is.
[288] *Ibid.*

These parks are called 'agriculture production Halal parks'. Halal parks that do not fall under any of the categories mentioned above do not have an ideal location and can only provide a more domestic function. These may be classified as 'state Halal Parks'; their locations vary and not all Halal parks are focused on exports. Some are established simply with the aim of providing support towards developing the local Halal industry.

Ironically, there are companies within 'Halal Parks' that are not reflective or supportive of the Halal industry or Halal value chain, which has watered-down the branding of Halal Parks. For example, there are three 'data centres' located within Techpark@enstek (in Negeri Sembilan). Although they have brought investments into the park, their presence does not support the Halal value chain and, as such, the 'exclusivity' of Halal Parks is not fully protected.

Islamic Consumerism in Singapore

Singapore, as noted by Nicole Tarulevicz, was and remains a nation obsessed with food[289]; while Gabriele Marranci suggests that food is not only a lucrative business but a symbol of Singapore's multicultural lifestyle.[290] Further, Kelvin Low of the National University of Singapore describes it as a 'food heaven'[291] with a very diverse foodscape, due partly to historical contexts where migrants filtered in from both the region and beyond. This is obvious if one looks at the sheer number of food establishments and hawker centers operating at any hour of the day, with nearly 20 new cafés opening each month across Singapore in 2015.[292] Food is literally available everywhere and almost all the time and, more importantly, is cheap. Not surprisingly, data from Singapore's Household Expenditure Survey (HES) 2012/13, indicated the expenditure of eating out (i.e. food purchased from food establishments, restaurants, food courts and hawker centers) was relatively higher across all income levels compared to food that required

[289] Nicole Tarulevicz, "Food Safety as Culinary Infrastructure in Singapore, 1920–1990", *Global Food History, 2:2* (2016):136.
[290] Gabriele Marranci, "Defensive or offensive dining? Halal dining practices among Malay Muslim Singaporeans and their effects on integration", *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* (2012) 23, 88.
[291] See Singapore's Food Culture: Have you eaten? The Graduate Jan-Mar 2016 NUS Publication 2016:137.
[292] *Ibid*. Hawkers Centre is so significant to Singapore to a level where in 2018 the Government submitted their Hawker Centre as UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

additional preparation, such as cooking. Another market study by A.C. Nielson of 202 respondents conducted in August 2018 showed that nearly one in four respondents indicated that they ate out daily, while more than half did so on a weekly basis. Moreover, 44% revealed they had purchased restaurant deliveries or meal-kit service online versus a 33% global average.

Diaz-Mendez and Garcia-Espejo posit that eating out is a consumer practice linked to modernity and the increase in the availability of convenience food in commercial eating establishments. Further, Lai states that eating out is a very common practice due to the low cost of the food provided.[293] In essence, eating out is no longer seen as just for special occasions but has become the new normal due to, among other things, changes in lifestyle and working hours, which have added complexity to the lives of consumers.

Figure 4-4 illustrates one of the most popular eating outlets, the Maxwell Food Centre located in Singapore's Chinatown. For those with relatively low disposable incomes eating out can be a challenge. Hence in one of the shops shown in the Figure, the name 'Economic' Bee Hoon may suffice to entice consumers over the 100 other stalls competing for attention. The average price for a plate of rice and chicken or bowl of noodles is SGD 4, whilst the stalls selling grilled meat and specialty seafood charge around SGD 8-10 for some dishes.[294] Generally, in hawker centre, hybridity is prevalent as elements of Chinese food such as *mee rebus* (boiled noodles), *Hainanese* Chicken Rice and *young tau foo* have found their way into Malay cuisine. Chua Beng Huat refers to this as 'Islamisation' of Chinese food [295] because all these dishes require is the slaughter of animals in accordance with Halal requirements and they contain no element of pork or lard in the ingredients. I see this this type of 'Islamisation' serving as an equilibrium point enabling both buyers and consumers to meet. Chua suggests this development occurred in the early to mid-1970s at a hawker centre opposite the Botanic Gardens,

[293] A.E. Lai, "A Neighbourhood in Singapore: Ordinary People's Lives 'Downstairs'". *Singapore: Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore*, (2009).
[294] See 10 Best Singaporean Hawker Centres at *https://au.hotels.com/go/singapore/best-singapore-hawker-centres*.
[295] Chua Beng Huat, "Life is Not Complete without Shopping: Consumption Culture in Singapore", NUS Press (2003):106.

popularly known as 'the Halal Hawker Centre'. He attributes this development to growing affluence and differentiation of gastronomic desires, which at the same time filled an increasingly frequent social need for formal dining acceptable to both Chinese and Malays.

Source: TNP by Joseph Lee and thefoodpornographer.com

Figure 4-4: Cheap food and the multiracial crowd is seen at one of the eating spots in Maxwell Food Centre

Public eating space, as suggested by Nicole Tarulevicz, emphasises 'cleanliness and etiquette'.[296] She argues that both are conflated and then merge together as a discourse of good behaviour constructed as an issue of morality, a failure of which can be deduced as a sign of betraying the long-term goals of prosperity and development of Singapore. Cleanliness is also a reflection of Halal values hence it sits well with the requirements set forth by MUIS for qualifying Halal eating outlets. Displaying Halal logo correctly at the eating outlets is an important etiquette, and cannot be understated. For example, an incident on 28 February 2018 caused Halal-certified premise, Green Delights located at Westgate Mall in Jurong East to suffer 20% dropped in sales after news of them purportedly selling pork cropped up online. As reported by *The New Paper* on 1 March 2018, the confusion was due to the placement of pork belly rice poster by the adjacent

[296] Nicole Tarulevicz, "Eating Her Curries and Kway: A Cultural History of Food in Singapore", (2013):44.

stall to Green Delight's Halal logo (as shown in Figure 4-5 below). The incident illustrates the trust and sensitivity of Malay Muslim consumers' on Halal logo placed at the Halal–certified stall, as an important marker for them dining at a public eating space.

Source: Facebook

Figure 4-5: Green Delights' Halal logo placed adjacent to the pork belly rice poster

There is, of course, the ongoing debate by people from both states on which hawker culture is better; my interest, however, is on the dynamics of Halal eating-out practice among the Malays at hawker centres in Singapore and how those dynamics might differ from the Malaysia experience. Singapore hosts all ethnicities and social classes under one roof and each group has got their own special delights – typically there will be at least one Halal restaurant in every hawker centre.[297] This observation is important as it 'teases out the politics of different people living together'[298] enabling us to ascertain how the

[297] This is contrary to hawker centres in Malaysia where it predominantly occupied and visited by a particular ethnic group. In addition, it is scatter around town or city unlike in Singapore where most of the centres are located near HDB flats or market.
[298] See Jean Duruz and Gaik Cheng Khoo, "Eating Together: Food, Space and Identity in Malaysia and Singapore", 4.

Malays navigate their religious piousness in various public spaces, knowing certain prohibitions and rules pertaining to Halal might not exist in other religions, and vice versa. Below I discuss Malays' consumption behaviour and nature in the context of multi-ethnic setting.

iii. Consumption for enacting belonging

A 2008 study by Nasir and Pereira involved 20 middle-class Malay Muslims (equally divided between genders) who described themselves as 'practicing' Muslims. Considered a 'controlled sampling', it was confined to middle-class Malays as the writers felt the educational experience of the middle-class person enabled them to be articulate and more reflective about attitudes and ideas on various issues. From the outset, the respondents stressed their preference for Halal space, but if this was not possible, they remained open and willing to dine at a food court or hawker center provided there was at least one Halal certified vendor. However, they would exercise precautions and vigilance for potential non-Halal contamination. They would, as much as possible, also avoid sitting too close to people who were eating non-Halal food and avoid putting their bare hands on the tables that had been cleaned with a wet cloth that may have been used to wipe non-Halal products.

The Nasir and Pereira study contradicts a perception of the leadership of Singapore (as highlighted in the previous chapters) that Malays are getting stricter in observing their religious obligations, especially in regard to food consumption, clothing, appearance and lifestyle. It also contradicts the continuous assertion that their religiosity hampers the fostering of social interactions with other ethnicities. In response to the perception of wariness, the Malays reacted in a manner that is bold and pragmatic. Perhaps exemplifying this is a 2010 study, also by Nasir and Pereira, which found that, while the Malay Muslim remained obedient to Islamic and Halal requirements, they were also pragmatic in accepting that they could still commit to observing those requirements if they took the necessary safeguarding steps. Indeed, the study ascertained that Malay Muslims were able to partake fully in Singapore's multicultural social life and not exclude themselves from the public sphere because of piousness or dietary requirements

by exercising their 'defensive dining' approach. The study refers to this practice as 'rituals of intimacy' that reflect the expression of social contexts and of self in public.[299]

Besides serving as a way to provide a sense of inclusion within the general public, 'defensive dining', to my view, acts as an important enabler for Malays to maintain their culture and identity. This is akin to the practice made by the Yunnan Hui, a Muslim community in Yunnan China, as posited by Jianping Wang '… being Hui was distressing (for those) who lived on the edge of two societies and were forced to have one foot in their Islamic culture and one foot in the "host" Chinese culture'.[300] Wang observes that despite living in isolation and being fewer in number, the Yunnan Hui have continued as an independent and highly prominent group to the present day. Similarly, this issue of identity and cultural conflict exists even in Southern Spain. In this case, Tunisian immigrants innovated the world's first Halal *jamón ibérico* as an avenue for co-existence and living together in the Southern Spanish cities of Seville and Almeria.[301] Those cities are arguably obsessed with cured pork products that exist in almost all cuisines.

A 2017 survey by the Institute of Policy Studies involving 2,020 Singaporeans (56% Chinese, 18% Indian, 22% Malays and 4% Others) concludes that religious markers are more important to Malays and Indians than to the Chinese. About 93% of Malays perceived being Muslim as at least somewhat important to their ethnic identity, as compared to 70.6% of Indian respondents in the case of Hinduism, and 37.4% of Chinese respondents in the case of Buddhism or Taoism. In relation to maintaining ethnic identity, 96% of the Malay respondents ranked the ability to read, write and speak Malay, converse in basic Malay and celebrate *Hari Raya Puasa* as important identity markers. The majority of Malays also consider Islam a core element of their identity with 93.3% of

[299] Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir and Alexius A. Pereira, "Defensive dining: notes on the public dining experiences in Singapore", *Springer Science + Business Media B.V. 2007* (2008):65.
[300] Jianping Wang, "Concord and Conflict: The Hui Communities in Yunnan Society in a Historical perspective", *Lund Studies in African and Asian Religion*, (1996):241.
[301] A common understanding that eating authentic *jamón ibérico de bellota,* a cured ham made from free-range pigs fed on acorns, is a key part of Spanish life, especially in the south. Faysal Mrad Dali, who was born and raised in Tunisia innovated first Halal *jamón* by replacing ham with Halal-slaughtered lamb, and sometime beef. The meat is cured in the most traditional Spanish method, for a minimum of six months, just like the pork *jamón* makers using fresh local spices such as thyme, paprika, and oregano.

Malays believing it is important or somewhat important for them to be Muslims. They also accept that they can observe their Halal requirements while eating at a public place if they take the necessary precautions. This emanates from their dual identity of being Singaporean as well as a Muslim in a non-Muslim majority setting.

iv. Halal adoption by companies

In the melting pot of Singapore's culinary diversity, hawker centers appeal to Muslim tourists seeking to indulge in a unique eating experience. Singapore's cultural proximity to neighbouring countries Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as continuous enhancement of tourism offerings, including the availability of Halal food, has enabled the country to record yet another achievement. This was partly due to a statement by HDC General Manager Syaifulzafni Aziz, as quoted by *The Star*, saying that the Muslim traveller sector is growing in terms of population and purchasing power.[302] According to the Singapore Tourism Board, between January and September 2018 international tourist arrivals from Muslim-dominated Indonesia reached 2.2 million tourists, and from Malaysia 0.9 million (excluding those arriving by land). This is considered a commendable achievement given that Singapore is a more expensive destination due to the Singapore dollar trading higher than the respective Malaysian Ringgit and Indonesian Rupiah. Indeed, in 2018 Singapore was the sixth most popular destination for the global Muslim travel market and the top non-Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) destination for the eighth consecutive year.[303] As well as demand for Halal from tourists, there is a substantial population of Muslim expatriates working and living in Singapore.[304]

This Muslim consumer market entices vendors, caterers and hawkers to have their food Halal certified. As reported in the 2017 MUIS Annual Report, there were 4,456 premises and 54,378 types of products certified Halal. However, after becoming certified, some

[302] See The Star 'Holiday the Halal Way' by Chester Chin 3 July 2016 https://www.star2.com/travel/2016/07/03/travel-the-halal-way/

[303] Data from Mastercard-Crescent Rating Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2018. The index surveyed 130 travel destinations worldwide, assessing them based on four criteria - access, communications, environment and services. These categories covered topics such as family-friendliness, safety and hospitality options.

[304] Based on HSBC Expat Explore Survey 2018, Singapore was ranked first out of 31 places (for the fourth year in a row) for expats to live and work in.

failed to maintain their compliance, with 103 cases in breach of Halal requirements recorded between 2015 and 2017. Violations included misuse of the Halal mark on websites, products and signage when no longer (or never) certified by MUIS. Operations of 22 premises were suspended for three to six months following the use or storage of undeclared products, non-Halal products, and use of doubtful ingredients. In addition, warning letters were issued to 44 companies due to various breaches. Another issue was fake or forged Halal certificates, reported mainly in relation to imported products.

As an open economy, Singapore has been an attractive place for multinational corporations to set up their regional operations. Alongside their business-friendly government policies, well established physical infrastructure and stable economic environment, the availability of a globally skilled workforce has been among their key development drivers. The inclusion of this global talent in the existing multi-ethnic consumer pool has enlarged the existing size of the Halal consumer market. This has motivated the adaptation of Halal certification by international fast food restaurant chains such as McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and Pizza Hut, signifying that Halal ventures do make economic sense. A prime example is McDonald's – after obtaining Halal, the company saw an increase of eight million patrons a year. Similarly, KFC, Burger King and Taco Bell have all seen a consumer increase of 20%.[305] Each restaurant had to undergo rigorous inspections by Muslim clerics to ensure ritual cleanliness and become fully Halal certified.[306]

Johan Fischer, in his article 'Looking for religious logos in Singapore', describes his fieldwork in Singapore's biggest grocery retailer, the National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) FairPrice.[307] Fischer explains how NTUC navigates the Halal journey from the appointment of a local Halal consultancy in their Joo Chiat Complex to organising standard operating procedures aimed at complying with Halal requirements and

[305] See Sabri M, 2006 as cited in K.H. Hanzaee and M.R. Ramezani, Intention to Halal Products in The World Markets Vol. 1, Issue. 5, May 2011 pg. 2.
[306] Watson J. L. 2006 as cited in Johan Fischer Looking for religious logos in Singapore Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion pg. 5.
[307] The retailer had earlier obtained its first International Standards Organisation (ISO) certificate in 1993 and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) around the same time.

introducing innovative ways to facilitate positioning of MUIS Halal logos in the packaging of their in-house brand. NTUC went the extra mile by setting up a Halal counter and establishing the Operational Halal Integrity Program to ensure the Halal control point is properly monitored, including minimisation of the potential risk of cross-contamination. A dedicated Halal Team was formed as a platform for internal discussion and interaction on matters pertaining to Halal as well as to empower staff with Halal training and development. In essence, NTUC FairPrice has been instrumental in advocating and promoting Halal by acting as a focal point between suppliers or food manufacturers, regulatory bodies and end-consumers in their food supply chain.

The proliferation of smart phone or mobile technology, besides connecting, creating and storing information, has been extended to include verifying the authenticity of Halal products. This was made possible in April 2019 through a newly created WhatsHalal application aimed at helping consumers to make a quick verification of Halal products and ingredients. According to the inventor, quoted in *Business Insider Singapore*, 'if it doesn't have a MUIS logo, what we do is we let the system learn over time. By default, the system knows – if there are salt and sugar, the system will flash "Halal" and "Halal". Only when they see pork, it will immediately say "not Halal". Very clear cut'.[308] However, it is too early to conclude the level of acceptance by the consumers of this application. Perhaps there will be repercussions from potential dilution of MUIS Halal branding as some of the traditionally known Halal products, such as imported salt and sugar, may not have MUIS certified Halal.

In relation to physical infrastructure, a media announcement on 2 May 2019 revealed a strategic collaboration between the Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SMCCI) and Elite Partners Capital to develop a Halal Hub in the western part of Singapore. The Hub is intended to house Halal food processing units, central kitchens, cold-rooms, a Halal Excellence Centre and logistics operations in a multi-storey, state-of-the-art complex touted to be the 'most advanced of its kind' in Southeast Asia. This

[308] See https://www.businessinsider.sg/this-singapore-made-app-will-tell-you-if-a-product-is-halal-or-not-just-by-scanning-its-barcode-or-ingredients-list/

represents yet another distinctive difference between Halal industry development in Singapore and in Malaysia in that, unlike Singapore, most physical infrastructure development in Malaysia is initiated by the government or is quasi-government. However, it is still unclear as to whether this Hub is going to have a major impact on Singapore's existing Halal exports as currently 70% of Singapore's food exports are already Halal certified.[309]

Apart from certification, MUIS also administers training, public awareness programs, information and feedback management, and surveillance – all with respect to Halal certification. The agency conducts engagement sessions to review existing policies and processes and organises industry dialogues and networking sessions as well as Halal courses designed to build industry capabilities. On October 15, 2019, MUIS hosted their first Singapore Halal Food Trade Exhibition (SIHAT). The event aimed to redefine global Halal business and experience – an ambitious goal coming from a secular state that has little knowledge of Islamic culture and tradition when compared with their neighbours Malaysia and Indonesia. Interestingly too, the abbreviation SIHAT means healthy in the Malay language.

This appears to be an attempt by Singapore to mainstream a Halal agenda and transform it from the religious domain to one of industrial and economic significance. Through the exhibition – a business forum and public awareness program – not only are all relevant stakeholders able to partake in Halal development affairs, but also all parties are engaged. Similarly, like Malaysia, the Singapore state now is playing a dual role in regulating and promoting the growth of the Halal industry; the only difference is in the apparatus or instrument used to carry out the agenda. However, as posited by Johan Fischer, the state promotion of Halal in Singapore 'presents a paradox': Halal as a traditional Muslim food taboo is promoted as a national and neutral brand that benefits the economy, while the moral implications are downplayed – especially in a Chinese-majority cultural context

[309] As reported in Business Times on 29 June 2017 by Syarafana Shafeeq "Singapore companies well-placed to tap China's halal market.

where Chinese social, religious and economic rituals are unavoidably intertwined. [310] Ironically, Fischer suggests that Malays in Singapore are simultaneously seen as a 'problem' as well as being instrumental to the production, promotion, regulation and consumption of Halal. He says the state portrays Chinese as hard-working and economically successful and so must 'tap' into the global and expanding market for Halal. Even a Chinese chauvinist political party, PAP, had, in 1999, initiated a series of dialogue sessions to gather feedback on issues affecting Malays, in which false Halal certification was debated.

The above narrative on Halal in Singapore follows the same pathway as the food safety domain in modern Singapore. As argued by Nicole Tarulevicz, popular knowledge on food safety alongside state policy and regulation, non-state actors (private and public, commercial and non-commercial), and print media, are joined in a concerted effort to exert subtle influence and promote food safety diffusion in modern food affairs.[311] She argues that food safety in Singapore (a form of culinary infrastructure) signifies a popular focus of shared responsibility by domestic actors along the chain, especially when local food production (through agriculture) is almost unattainable. As for Halal, it is a shared responsibility of all parties – the state and non-state actors, Halal certified producers, retailers, outlet operators, hawker centers, mobile apps creators, media, Halal park operators and tourism service providers, whether Muslim or non-Muslim – to work together and reap the benefit of shared prosperity from commercialising Halal.

Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter has demonstrated the relationships between consumer and corporation (Halal-certified producers, food operators, technology providers, event organiser, etc.) on one hand, and between these two actors and the pursuit of a Halal

[310] Johan Fischer, "Looking for religious logos in Singapore", *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*: 5

[311] See Nicole Tarulevicz Food Safety as Culinary Infrastructure in Singapore, 1920-1990 "Global Food Industry" Routledge Taylor & Francis Group pg-150-151. In her article, she argues that food safety is a shared responsibility and is one form of culinary infrastructure. Food Safety in Singapore amalgamates various elements including twentieth-century newspaper that served to create awareness to consumers, pressured companies and forced government to introduce appropriate policy and regulation, supported by private and public entities, as well as for profit or non-profit organisations.

agenda on the other. Between these in Malaysia there is the state presence (through various apparatuses and policy instruments) orchestrating and shaping the new and moderate Malay Muslim consumption model with the intended outcome of creating Malay hegemony in Malaysia. While in Singapore, the state is transitioning Halal consumption from promoting racial harmony to nation building and, at a later stage, consumption to boost the economic trajectory. The ultimate objectives of the state in controlling the Halal agenda appears to be serving the interest of the political elites and business class. The Malaysian narrative exposes the fragility of shallow consumerism, largely molded by Malay political masters striving for power and wealth. Whereas the Singaporean narrative consistently reminds us that stability is the utmost priority – national supersedes religious. Before Halal became part of the global economy, the Singapore state criticised Malays as being too obsessed about Halal and allegedly deemed that as detrimental to social interaction. Malays are urged to collaborate with others (and are constantly warned that religious beliefs must remain private) so as to build more shared activities. But now, Halal is promoted as a national brand with significant benefit to the economy. The mantra of national supersedes religious remains, where the underlying values of Halal are downplayed amidst the cultural dominance of the majority Chinese. The manner in which Malay Muslims demonstrate consumerism, by being pragmatist or purist, is a manifestation of their Islamic identity and practices. The corporate/commercial world is adapting to the dynamic of the growing and changing Malay consumption trend by innovating various Halal offerings. At times, they went overboard, beyond consumer demand, exposing themselves to various uncalculated risks and threatening their business viability.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored that Halal systems goes beyond religious injunction in establishing theoretical support for the thesis argument. It has shown that the constant reinterpretation of what constitutes Halal to be reliant on cultural and social practices, therefore showing Halal to be both historically and socially constructed. The key argument was the state authorities in Malaysia and Singapore have been at the forefront in exploiting Islamic values and ideas for the purpose of attaining hegemony and sustaining dominance. Halal certification systems expression is therefore, a reflection of these outcomes.

The management of Halal production, certification and regulation are, in Jeffrey Pilcher's terms, a form of 'culinary infrastructure'.[312] Halal certification is also increasingly the business of governments, as in the cases of Malaysia and Singapore where Halal is entangled with '… intense political negotiation'.[313] Pilcher rightly sees the colonial experience (as I have shown with reference to Malaysia and Singapore) as crucially influential in the forming of knowledge infrastructure. By analysing the colonial experience, this thesis has shown that Islam and Malay's cultural practices are prominent impetuses towards political and socio-economic stability, albeit in a dynamic, multi-ethnic and multicultural setting. The thesis highlights a structured social control way of leveraging this connection that can be traced back to the anti-colonial uprising in the mid-19th century instigated by the Malay elites who were infuriated by the British tax collection system. Until that time, Islam had been safeguarded through the power-sharing arrangement between the sultans and the British.

I endeavour to elaborate on Pilcher's knowledge infrastructure in relation to Halal standards development. The initiative to develop Halal standards was introduced (in 2000 for Malaysia and in 2007 for Singapore) to institutionalise knowledge and practices, and to clarify ambiguity surrounding the market, thereby resulting in a standard form.

[312] Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "Culinary Infrastructure: How facilities and technologies create value and meaning around food". *Global Food History* 2(2), (2016): 118.
[313] *Ibid* 119.

Further, standards development incorporates modern methods – such as audit and compliant processes, enforcement, and quality management – and general business requirements to reflect the compatibility between Islam and modernity. In so doing, Halal expression in Malaysia and Singapore is reflective of an outcome of modernisation of Malay people's consumerism, bureaucratisation and industrialisation of Islam as culinary infrastructure. Perhaps what Pilcher neglects to address is that the failure of this infrastructure can be more severe in its consequences than failure of physical infrastructure where it leads to a mere supply shortage. As shown in the examples of the consumer boycotts involving Cadbury in Malaysia and Green Delights in Singapore, the direct consequences of a company's purported Halal violation can in fact ruin their reputation and branding, eventually affecting business profitability. Perhaps this could be another potential area to investigate, as it would offer a wider perspective on knowledge infrastructure, especially related to consumption risk, for future reference.

The thesis found that the compelling interplay between Malay culture and Islam was the key factor behind state motivation to manage Halal certification. Issues surrounding culinary practice are given due attention as both states work on a range of initiatives to accommodate Malay consumption requirements and dictate the mechanisms and approaches to fulfilling those requirements. Given the pervasive influence of religion in the daily lives of 21st century Malays, there is a necessity to assess and analyse their contemporary Halal consumption practice as, increasingly, they live and interact with other cultures. Today's Malays are determined to select and prepare food in a way that reflects their strong sense of Muslim identity; this includes those who prepare the food, whether they are observant and practising Muslim or otherwise. What I have demonstrated is that *contextual* differences of racial composition (i.e. Malays being a majority in Malaysia but a minority in Singapore) and of political landscapes in Malaysia and Singapore, are what shaped Halal regulation and administration. This, in turn, motivates the dominant political parties of these states, UMNO and PAP respectively, to consider religious values and ideas – from Halal certification systems to Halal industry development – and to use their political power to establish these institutions and systems.

In Malaysia, Halal functions on the one hand as a political conduit for UMNO to project its image as an Islamic promoter to secure rural Malay Muslim support, thereby undermining its rival PAS (the Malaysian Islamic Party). On the other hand, Halal serves as one of the key pillars for economic growth, enticing the educated urban Malays as well as the wider non-Muslim population. The UMNO party, since the late 20th century era of Mahathir Mohammad, inculcated Islamic values and practices through streams of Islamisation. Institutions relevant to Halal certification systems and industrial development were established, funded and proclaimed to serve religious needs, and, in the process, defined acceptable practices. The adoption of Malay cultural practices into religious requirements is embedded in Halal standards development. Modernisation and industrialisation agendas were Mahathir's top priorities to stimulate economic growth. Even when the non-Muslim population became suspicious of government attempts to impose Islamic values on them, their dissatisfaction was subtle rather than destructive, as during Mahathir's leadership Malaysia attained significant economic growth from his industrialisation approach.[314] Hence, Malaysia managed to achieve greater development and improved business opportunities that benefited its growing population.

Under the leadership of Mahathir's successor, Abdullah Badawi, Halal industry development was introduced to invigorate a pathway for building a new class of Malay entrepreneurs. The knowledge of their 'self-defined' global Halal markets thus gave Malaysia an edge to compete economically with others. This potential was further unlocked with the development of 24 Halal industrial parks to facilitate Halal production. Commercialisation of Halal products and services was accelerated through the world's largest Halal trade showcase, MIHAS, that brought together global buyers and suppliers of Halal-certified products from around the world. On a smaller scale, the Halfest carnival serves as a platform for manufacturers and service providers from the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) category to showcase products and reach out directly to their end buyers. To policymakers, the goal was a connected global Halal trade network

[314] Under the leadership of Mahathir Mohammed, Malaysia managed to attain the status of an upper middle-income country from a low-income agrarian economy. The economy has diversified beyond agriculture and primary commodities to include manufactured goods. More than 65% of its total population lives in urban areas.

and business community with Malaysia as a hub. In this way, Halal has become increasingly central to the emergence of Malay entrepreneurs with global market connections.

In the case of Singapore, Halal certification can be construed as an expression of the ruling PAP's broader approach to religious management. In essence, this approach includes state intervention in religious affairs through the development of laws and regulations. Rules and permissible parameters pertaining to religions are ambiguous and subject to various interpretations, hence open for manipulation. So all religious movements and interest groups are encouraged to work closely with PAP and discouraged from participating in any political activities. Any religious movements deemed a threat to national security and public order are strictly prohibited. This situation is aggravated by the prevalent *Kiasu* culture (in Hokkien meaning 'the fear of losing out', 'afraid to lose' and 'winning at all cost') common among Singaporeans.[315]

Singapore's geographic location in a predominantly Malay region has contributed to a feeling of insecurity among certain government officials. The state, therefore, has attempted to reassure their Malay citizens that they are not in danger of losing their cultural and religious identity while the state attempts to safeguard other traditional cultures and values. The state seeks to legitimise its position by empowering MUIS as a sole certifier equipped with professional managers to manage the entire spectrum of Islamic affairs, including Halal certification, education, training, *waqf* (bequeathing), and *zakat* (the annual obligatory tax) system. I argue that the underlying objectives include first, to show that the PAP is capable of safeguarding religion and cultural values, which helps to dispel any perception that Malays are being neglected, and second, negates any adversarial situations. However, the implementation of such a policy, unlike in Malaysia,

[315] Janice T.S. Ho, C.E. Ang, Joanne Loh, Irene Ng. "A preliminary study of kiasu behaviour - is it unique to Singapore?" Journal of Managerial Psychology. Bradford: (1998) Vol. 13, ISS. 5/6; pg. 359 conclude that kiasuism is much associated with Singapore and has officially been declared as being "hailed as a national fixation in Singapore". Lily Zubaidah Rahim "Governing Islam and Regulating Muslims in Singapore's Secular Authoritarian State", Working Paper No.156 (1996) pg. 9-10 posits that behaviour or identity among Singaporeans has been shaped by the narrative that the country is small with very limited resources, and surrounded by a Malay dominated region. It relates to survival instinct and the need to be competitive.

is anchored in meritocracy – which PAP proclaimed as the official guiding principle of its policy formulation.

Further, I argue that state leverage on Halal certification aims to shape the construction of Malays' identity to be inclusive and adaptive in their social life. The Malays tend to be creative in their socialising process while still adhering to their Islamic consumption practices. In this context, the Malays navigate their religious piousness with cautious vigilance for potential non-Halal contamination when dining with others. The hawker centres, unlike restaurants or some cafés, are often organised in a way that results in strangers dining at the same table. The Malays remain steadfast in their dietary requirements as this reflects their sense of belonging, a significant factor in defining their identities. Besides connecting to their religious rituals, Halal offers an exclusive space for the Malays to be in control, with some sort of 'authority' or an imagined controlled space.[316] The MUIS Halal logo displayed at the eating outlets provides much needed reassurance to the Malay.

Having complete control over the certification services has placed the Singapore State as the sole dispenser of the Halal logo, thereby defining Halal based on their own interpretation and so maintaining their hegemony and control. In this regard, Halal certification is not entirely about compliance with Muslim dietary requirements but is a form of religious bureaucracy, which at times has succumbed to various controversies. The mixture of an economic concept with a religious concept is challenging; therein lies the importance of having in place both sound governance and a strong institutional structure to ensure that Halal integrity is not compromised for quick economic gain.

This thesis has demonstrated that despite discontent towards stricter requirements and a very high standard for awarding the Halal logo, many businesses, especially those owned

[316] Being a minority, prejudice and plain stereotyping of Islam and the Malays consistently portrays them as distinct, separate, complacent, lacking motivation and discipline, less competitive compared to others and exposed to drug addiction and other criminality. This perception has made the Malays defensive, and consequently,Halal provides them with some sort of' 'feel-good-factor'. Nasir, Pereira and Turner (2009) state that Malays in Singapore are fastidious about Halal but they practice this fastidious pragmatically in the context of the ethnic Chinese majority.

by non-Muslims, still opted for Halal certification. So much so to gain trust from their Muslim consumers, thereby gaining more market share. This has placed the Halal logo at a higher value, particularly when coming from a government-backed Halal certification body as it is perceived as reliable and largely accepted by local consumers and the export market. As a faith-based certification system, the exclusive characteristics of a Halal logo, and the established standards and protocols remain pertinent in safeguarding trust. Such trust can be understood as an appropriate tool that facilitates Malays' consumption practices, especially consumption of products manufactured by multinational companies and those run by non-Muslims. Marketing and promotion of Halal by the governments of Malaysia and Singapore is evidenced through a series of activities – such as Malaysian International Halal Showcase (MIHAS), World Halal Conference (WHC) and Singapore Halal Food Trade Exhibition (SIHAT) – that serve to elevate Halal from domestic to international markets.

Halal certification in Malaysia and Singapore illustrates that Malay Muslim consumption practices are consistent regardless of whether they are in a majority or minority Muslim environment. Muslim consumers have increasingly become aware of their religious obligation, and their Halal application encompasses various *syariah* compliance products and services, including food and beverages, apparel, logistics, pharmaceutical and hygiene products[317]. Further, they increasingly make choices that reassert their identity as a Malay and a Muslim, albeit living in a multi-ethnic country. Therefore, any political party not considering how to please them is at risk of becoming irrelevant.

Despite sharing similar historical backgrounds and cultures, Malaysia and Singapore are substantially different in a number of aspects. The public realm for Islam is much bigger in Malaysia as it is the official religion and is ceremoniously projected to give the impression of its dominance in all major public events in the country. Halal has made it possible for Malaysia to preserve Malay political dominance and to attain economic advantages in the global Halal marketplace. In Singapore, Halal is placed between

[317] Scholars have acknowledged that more Malays are now going to the mosque during Friday prayer, more women are wearing the headscarf and more people are attending religious gatherings.

promoting the state as a global Halal hub, due to its potential for economic development, and championing the interests and needs of its minority Malay Muslim consumers (as part of their religious management), albeit in a Chinese-dominated cultural setting. This offers justification as to why Halal development has been driven mainly by multi-ethnic countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, and not by mainstream Muslim-majority nations that often argue that all food available in their country is naturally Halal. From the established Halal acts, policies and regulations, to the setting up of institutions and the certification system that skewed towards Malays' cultural and social practices – all formed part of culinary infrastructure where, apart from a religious injunction, Halal is masked and constructed alongside both a political and a larger economic realm.

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